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***What is the effect of Information and Communication Technology via OpenLearning
on Speaking Fluency for ESL Students in a Francophone High School in Greater Montreal?***

***Quel est l'impact de la technologie de l'information et des communications via OpenLearning
sur l'aisance orale en anglais langue seconde chez les élèves dans une école secondaire
francophone du Grand Montréal?***

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ESL: English as a Second Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

QEP: Quebec Education Program

MMR: Mixed Methods Research

TIC: La Technologie de l'Information et des Communications

ALS: Anglais Langue Seconde

LES: Learning and Evaluation Situation

L2: Second Language

FSE: Fédération des Syndicats de l'Enseignant

MELS: Ministry of Education and Leisure and Sport

TBLT: Task-Based Language Teaching

CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning

MIDI: Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion

ESP: English for specific purposes

LLSNS: Language Learning Social Network Sites

FLT: Field of Foreign Language Teaching

PFÉQ: Programme de Formation de L'École Québécoise

EAVSC: English Audio-Video Speaking Class

MSN: Messenger

EAL: English as an Additional Language

IT: Information Technology

CLA: Communicative Language Ability

FTF: Compared to Face-to-Face

HELLO: Hand-Held Language Learning Organization

PDA: Personal Digital Assistance

WLAN: Wireless Local Area Network

P: Participant

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ABSTRACT

My research was driven by my conviction that learning is only possible when it becomes authentic. Learning is authentic when it can be used to fulfil the learner's different needs in authentic life situations, when it creates a bridge between what is learned in class and what can be done with this knowledge outside the classroom through the use of ICT through the use of ICT.

The main objective of my research was to show the functional role of ICTs in helping students in the context of a Francophone high school in Montreal speak English more fluently inside and outside the four walls of the second language classroom. Therefore, the study tried to answer the following question: what kind of impact do ICTs have on English speaking fluency for ESL (English as a second language) students in a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal?

This study is a mixed-method type research incorporating a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The thirty-four participants, aged between 16 and 18 years, were ESL students who attended a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal. The study comprised three different instruments for data collection: a Descriptive Teacher Evaluation Grid to measure the development of the speaking skill of the participants before and after the use of the technology learning tool, a Structured Interview conducted with 4 participants to help understand the significance of the intervention lived by these participants in the study, and a Student Self-Evaluation Grid to evaluate the effect of the technological intervention on the development of the participants' fluency based on their own perception.

The intervention tool used in the study was an online platform called OpenLearning. Through this technological tool, the participants were engaged in online oral interaction activities about *Bullying*. In the school and at home, they had access to laptops, ipads or mobile phones. The study concluded that the OpenLearning technology had encouraged most of the participants to produce a continuous fluent speech in English and created a bridge between the ESL classroom and the students' outer world.

Key words: ICTs, OpenLearning technology, ESL, developing English fluency, students' preferences, motivation, engagement

RÉSUMÉ

Ma recherche a été motivée par ma conviction que l'apprentissage n'est possible que lorsqu'il devient authentique. L'apprentissage sera authentique lorsqu'il est utilisé pour répondre aux différents besoins de l'apprenant dans des situations de la vie réelle, lorsqu'il crée un lien entre ce qui est appris en classe et ce qui peut être fait avec ces connaissances en dehors de la classe. L'objectif principal de ma recherche était de montrer le rôle fonctionnel de la technologie de l'information et des communications (TIC) pour aider les élèves dans le contexte d'un lycée francophone de Montréal à parler anglais plus couramment à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur des quatre murs de la classe de l'anglais langue seconde (ALS). Par conséquent, l'étude a tenté de répondre à la question suivante: quel impact les TIC ont-elles sur l'aisance orale en anglais chez les élèves de l'ALS dans un lycée francophone du Grand Montréal ?

Cette étude est une recherche de type mixte incorporant une combinaison de méthodes de collecte de données quantitatives et qualitatives. Les trente-quatre participants, âgés de 16 à 18 ans, suivaient le programme de base en anglais langue seconde dans une école secondaire francophone du Grand Montréal. L'étude comprenait trois instruments différents pour la collecte de données: une grille d'évaluation descriptive utilisée par l'enseignant pour mesurer le développement de la compétence orale des participants avant et après l'utilisation de l'outil technologique, une entrevue structurée menée avec quatre participants pour comprendre l'importance de l'intervention vécue par ces participants à l'étude et une grille d'auto-évaluation remplie par les participants pour évaluer l'impact de l'intervention technologique sur le développement de l'aisance orale des participants en fonction de leur propre perception.

L'outil d'intervention utilisé dans l'étude était une plate-forme en ligne appelée *OpenLearning*. Via cet outil technologique, les participants étaient engagés dans des activités d'interaction orale en ligne sur le thème de l'intimidation. À l'école et à la maison, les élèves avaient accès à des ordinateurs portables, des iPads ou des cellulaires. L'étude a conclu que la technologie *OpenLearning* avait encouragé la plupart des participants à produire un discours continu et fluide en anglais, et a créé un pont entre la classe de l'ALS et la vie quotidienne des participants.

Mots-clés : TIC, la technologie *OpenLearning*, ALS, développement de l'aisance orale, préférences des élèves, motivation, engagement

CHAPTER 1: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 The Research Problem and Its Context

“The limits of my language are the limits of my world.” - Ludwig Wittgenstein

One of my greatest preoccupations and challenges as a second language teacher is how to make English, the language that I started learning at age four and which is the language that I have been teaching for 18 years, represent authentic or everyday life language use. As a teacher, a bachelor in English Literature and Linguistics, a researcher and a lifelong learner, I believe that the principal intention of learning is to acquire and construct knowledge to fulfill everyday life purposes and needs. In other words, the aim of learning English is to serve the learner’s needs in life, open new horizons and help students surpass borders and overcome limits.

Why would a francophone high school student need to speak English more fluently nowadays? This is the primary question that I have always asked myself, a question that I asked my francophone students in Lebanon, and a question that I ask my francophone students in Quebec, usually at our first meeting. The answer has always been to fulfil the teenager’s everyday life purposes. Those needs can simply start by chatting on social media and can mount up to seeking knowledge and achieving the job of their dreams. My students’ answer has always been, “we need to use it in our everyday life, but we find it difficult to express ourselves as fluently and accurately as native speakers do”.

Every time I ponder on their answer and look into their results, I find a discrepancy between their grades in English and what they can actually produce in English. What is the point in getting an 80% or 90% on a grammar test, but being unable to communicate using clear simple sentences? What is the intent of answering correctly a true or false exam, a vocabulary test or any other short answer activity on a reading comprehension test if the outcome is not to know how to answer a real-life question addressed to them in an informal chat or in a job interview? I believe that limits, boundaries and problems do not exist, but challenges exist to help us test our potentials and maximize our effort to pursue our goals in life. For this, my research is triggered by my belief as a person and a teacher and is empowered by my students’ need to become fluent real-life speakers of English.

Based on my experience and observations as a language teacher, I am convinced that students need to speak English fluently for various reasons. Some believe that they need to speak fluently because English is one of the most important international languages in the 21st century. Other students say that a good command of the language can help them find a job. Others want to use English on social media or to communicate with friends.

However, students express some constraints that hindered them from speaking English fluently. Some students say that they avoid oral production only because they are anxious and self-conscious of making mistakes while speaking English in front of everyone else in the classroom. Others say that English is to them a foreign language which is not often needed in their environment. Some others say that they did not have to speak English in elementary school English class, so they grew less skillful in oral production.

The school where my study was conducted is a high school situated in Greater Montreal. The region is considered disadvantaged. According to the socio-economic index report published by the government of Quebec in 2017, many students that join this school come from families where the mother does not hold a diploma, a certificate or a degree and/or the parents are unemployed (Gouvernement du Québec, 2017). The school is multiethnic and accommodates around 1300 students, 48.3% of them are first generation immigrants, 39.7% are second generation immigrants and 12% are third generation immigrants or more. Therefore, many students begin attending school at the age of twelve or more and start with the francization program. However, it is worth mentioning that some ethnic groups, such as the Greeks, the Armenians, the Indians etc., do have a good command of English since it is the second language spoken at home. Some students would say that their preoccupation is learning and speaking French because their aim is to integrate in the community where they live. However, they also believe that learning and speaking English is a need. To them, having a good command of the English language would help them find a better job, interact with the English community, join an English college, use technology and travel as tourists or as sports players. Therefore, my study aimed at enhancing English fluency that would help the students integrate in their community and would facilitate their life.

We cannot discuss the high school francophone students in Quebec, who face challenges in expressing themselves and interacting orally in English, without mentioning the particularity

of Quebec and the complexity of its geographical location. In fact, many challenges come along the teaching and learning of English in Quebec. Some of those are the motivation to live within the only Francophone province in North America, and the gap between the importance of knowing English and the level of oral competency achieved by ESL (English as a second language) learners. Some other challenges can be the immigration policy and the Montreal's cosmopolitan, multicultural, multilingual and multi-ethnic context (*Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation*, 2014). There exist other challenges that our high school students report regarding oral fluency in English. Some of which could be that our students are capable of understanding spoken English discourse, but have a difficulty in producing a speech that flows easily and smoothly without hesitation or in maintaining a conversation in English. Some students say that these difficulties are the result of the minimal exposure to English fluency activities in the context of learning in elementary school, and/or the limited opportunity to speak English outside the school in the context of a francophone community.

To what extent is learning English important to people living in some parts of Quebec? Some Quebecers find that the influence of English in North America can be a threat to the French language, culture and values. Immigrants, who arrive in Quebec, carrying with them their own mother-tongue, culture and values, find it difficult to live, work or study without a good command of French. Therefore, they prioritize the learning of French as a necessary tool that can help them integrate faster in school, work and society. While some people consider that learning English is not a priority, some other students, parents and influential people, insist on the learning of English as a second language. Their goal is not to anglicize young people, but to provide them with equal opportunities in a globalized world (Schink, 2014).

My experience in teaching ESL in high school and my observations during my daily practice, seem to indicate that there also exist other causes that could lead my high school students to encounter challenges in speaking English. According to the *Fédération des Syndicats de l'Enseignant* (FSE), those challenges could be the result of a lack of motivation, a lack of insight that English is important as an international language, learning difficulties, adaptation problems, behavioral disorders, anxiety, or simply adolescence and its challenges (FSE, 2013).

The causes described above could partially explain the examination results of the Ministry of Education and Leisure and Sport (MELS) that highlight a decline in the general average grade of standardized tests in English as a second language, secondary 5 core program, in the public sector. The average was 80.2% in June 2009, 76.1% in June 2010, 75.7% in June 2011, 75.3% in June 2012, 76.2 % in June 2013 and 75.8% in June 2014 (Government of Québec, 2014).

The MELS has deployed efforts to enhance the learning of English as a second language through the Quebec Education Program (QEP) that is designed to guide and help high school students to better communicate in English in situations specific to their age, their needs and their interests (Government of Quebec, 2006b). However, I see that, practically in a heterogeneous classroom, there is a gap between what the QEP expects the students to achieve in oral interaction and the real capacity of ESL learners to interact orally in English. The QEP expects high school learners, core and enriched, to interact orally in English, spontaneously and with perseverance in all classroom situations. Then, students are continuously evaluated on fluency, accuracy, participation in oral interaction, pertinence of the message, coherence and management of strategies and resources. All of these criteria must be observed and evaluated by the ESL teacher in a spontaneous discussion and without any previous preparation of the topic of discussion or debate (Government of Quebec, 2006b).

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However, the program does not take into account the heterogeneity within the group and ignores, to some extent, the fact that some students are unilingual, are newcomers to Quebec, or have linguistic learning difficulties. Therefore, they are unable to express themselves fluently, accurately and spontaneously in English. In the same respect, it is important to mention that some teachers might find it difficult to evaluate 30 to 35 students interacting orally and spontaneously in English while integrating the evaluation criteria prescribed in the program of studies. This difficulty of evaluating oral interaction makes some teachers choose speaking activities and situations that can be less time consuming, less stressful when it comes to classroom management, and more efficient for the students. *The Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation* (CSE, 2014), sees that the Quebec Education Program (QEP) is ambitious. According to the CSE, the development of the competency, *to interact orally in English* in the QEP, neither targets bilingualism, nor helps students with language difficulties improve their speaking skill in English.

Failure to find a solution to the problematic situation described above, could mean that we are drawing back from the second mission of the school in Quebec whose principal responsibility is to ensure that all students have an opportunity to acquire the knowledge they need to successfully be able to join the workplace and contribute in the community.

The MELS emphasizes that “all students should be able to leave secondary school with a diploma that represents the equivalent of a recognized passport for their subsequent path in life, whether they choose to continue their education or to enter the job market” (Government of Quebec, 2004, p. 5). Dutrisac (2016) argues that in the region of Montreal, immigrants who do not have a good command of English do not have access to 40% of jobs in Quebec. This percentage, according to Dutrisac (2016), is based on a report that was submitted to the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion (MIDI) in November 2014.

Therefore, the functional knowledge of English is a corollary in the educational, cultural, personal, professional and social life of every student. A good command of English is a bridge that enables students to transition from the school life towards other academic levels, professional development, or work opportunities.

Relating once again to my challenge which is to make English represent authentic life and be used by students to facilitate their life and fulfill their needs, I would summarize the description of my research problem in its context by the following open-ended question: How can I support my students to achieve their goal of speaking English more fluently?

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1.2 The Effect of Technology

Deriving from my conviction that the teaching-learning process starts from the learners' preferences, needs and interests, I consider that, nowadays, technology has become an interesting learning tool that can help these learners improve their language skills. It is a tool that has become the learners' companion. The objective is to provide the learners with tools that can help them communicate in the second language. A good command of English can help students have equal chances in the context of today's world (*Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation*, 2014, p. 6).

Today, students start school at the age of five with a great facility in using technological tools, software and applications. Technology is a pedagogical tool which motivates students and engages them in the teaching-learning process. Learners can efficiently employ technology tools to interact orally in English at their own pace at school or at home (*Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation*, 2014).

1.3 Elements of Literature Review

While searching for empirical resources and scientific studies relating to my topic and research problem, I realized that few were available in Quebec related to technology as a tool that can help high school francophone students improve their oral interaction and speaking in English. Most of the studies I found related to my topic of interest were conducted outside Canada, and more specifically outside Quebec, the context of my research. However, this challenge did not hinder me from wanting to conduct my own research in this respect and try to leave a trace in the world of education. My decision was triggered by my determination to make English real and tangible. I feel that it is my responsibility to help my students use English in their everyday life: at school, in college, at work, in society, on a trip or on social media.

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My research topic is a reality that my colleagues, my students and I live in the ESL classroom. The relevance and importance of the problem described above has led some school boards to hold continuous training workshops every academic year in order to guide teachers and provide them with support to help students overcome the English language difficulties they encounter. Some school boards, for instance, build intervention plans and provide support services to help those students develop their languages competencies. For this purpose, some students have access to internet, laptops and electronic dictionaries (*Commission scolaire de Laval*, 2016).

With the aim of resolving the problem, I propose in this research the integration of technology as an assistive pedagogical tool that can help students who face linguistic difficulties in English develop their competency *to interact orally in English* and become real-life speakers who are capable of using the target language to fulfill their different needs and purposes in life.

Karsenti & Collin (2013), who conducted a qualitative research in Quebec, emphasize the advantages of integrating technology in elementary and high school. Through a questionnaire, they surveyed 2,712 students (from grades 3 to 11) and 389 teachers. The analysis of the questionnaire results shows the essential role that technologies play in fostering writing skills and motivation. Holistically, the data collected in this research demonstrate 10 main advantages of the pedagogical use of technologies in the classroom: motivation, the facility in accessing information, the variety of educational resources available for the students and the teachers, the development of the writing skills, the development of efficient work methods for students, the development of the sentiment of being competent as a learner, the development of differentiated instruction, the contribution to the quality of work done by the students, the ability to prepare young learners for their socio professional future, the development of communication skills and group work (Karsenti & Collin, 2013, p. 115).

The data that was collected and the analysis of the results obtained in their research can help me verify the pertinence of integrating technology tools as a remedy or a solution that I propose to solve my problem of research. Similarly, the MELS ensures that the use of Information and Communication Technologies promotes motivation and the development of the disciplinary and transversal competencies; they reinforce the autonomy and responsibility of learners through helping them construct their own knowledge, as they enable them to connect with the world of knowledge, and share ideas and achievements with others (Government of Quebec, 2006a, p. 46).

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Kramersch (2014) has argued the impact of globalization on the way foreign languages are taught, learned and used. He describes the use of English as a dominant language in social media in general, and specifically in online communication; the fact that encourages language learning and supports multilingualism. This also supports my choice of technology as a useful tool that can help solve the problem related to the challenges that some students face in using English in speaking. Communicating through social media can help those students practice their English speaking in a fun and efficient manner.

In the same sense, Benson's (2015) study demonstrates that technology tools, such as YouTube videos, enhance communication and language learning through creating a fertile

environment for interaction especially through the comments and online discourse of the viewers. Moreover, Blake points out that “computer-assisted language learning (CALL) can contribute to L2 language growth in terms of the four skills – speaking, listening, reading and writing – especially if carefully situated within a task-based language teaching (TBLT)” (Blake, 2016, p. 129). When using the computer and internet to communicate, students would be listening to or reading the message of the other party they are communicating with. Then, they would be given the opportunity to answer questions, give opinions and exchange in speaking or in writing. In its turn, the CALL supports my choice of solution.

In her recent study entitled *Individual versus Interactive Task-Based Performance Through Voice-Based Computer-Mediated Communication*, by Granena (2016) emphasizes the importance of oral interaction in learning English as a second language. The study was carried out at a Spanish university and showed that the integration of computer-mediated technology in the L2 classroom had pre-to-post learning gains under individual and interactive performance. In the same sense, most of the studies conducted over the last two decades indicated positive findings for the impact of CALL on L2 learning outcomes, suggesting that learners in technology-mediated or technology-assisted environments are likely to show a positive L2 development (Plonsky, Luke & Ziegler, 2016). Plonsky, Luke and Ziegler’s research targeted the following question: Compared to face-to-face (FTF) contexts, how effective is computer-assisted language learning in promoting L2 learning? The meta-analysis that they conducted demonstrates the positive impact of computer-assisted language learning in developing the learners’ vocabulary, reading comprehension and pronunciation (Plonsky, Luke & Ziegler, 2016). Zhao’s (2003) narrative review demonstrated a consistent pattern of positive results across more than 150 studies from nearly all areas of language education, concluding that technology was not only useful for L2 development, but also specifically for the enrichment of input, the provision of feedback, and for fostering authentic communication.

The descriptive results of the students’ responses to a survey questionnaire conducted in the study on *Blended Learning Using Video-Based Blogs: Public Speaking for English as a second Language Students* show the positive effect of using blogs and videos on speaking English and on communication (Shih, 2010). The study was carried out in a public university in southern Taiwan and combined qualitative and quantitative approaches. It included peer and

instructor feedback, interviews, self-reflection, and a learning satisfaction survey. “This study aimed to establish a blended teaching and learning model combining online and face to face instructional blogging for an English for specific purposes (ESP) course named *English Public Speaking*” (Shih, 2010, p. 883). The participants were 44 senior English majors. They were composed of 37 female and 7 male students enrolled in the *English speaking Public* class at public university in southern Taiwan. Of these students, three males (M) and three females (F) participated in the interview process during the last week of class. The results indicated that all six students see that video-based blogs are effective tools that foster the teaching and learning of public speaking. “Four of them mentioned that they could obtain advice from group members about how to improve their speeches as well as learn from other students by reviewing other members’ videos” (Shih, 2010, p. 893). A student said that using a video to learn public speaking can lower the learner’s anxiety, while another student said that she preferred more interactive speaking practice in the classroom.

The studies that I have reviewed and presented earlier in this section show that technology has a positive effect on L2 learning. Using technology in the ESL or L2 classroom fosters speaking and communication; interaction and collaboration, whether it is between the learners and the computer or tablet; or between or among people (Chun, Dorothy & Santa, Barbara, 2016). This demonstration, however, does not eliminate the challenges that the students and the teachers might face in this respect (Karsenti & Collin, 2013) and the limitations that they might encounter when it comes to the time constraint, to the access to ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) in disadvantaged schools and the shortage in technology skilled teachers. Another constraint is the time it takes to prepare ICT activities and the technical problems that the teacher might face when relying on technologies and the internet to accomplish a learning task.

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1.4. Formulation of the Problem and the General Question of Research

Following the description of my research problem in relation with high school students in Quebec who encounter challenges in speaking English, I proposed technology as a pedagogical

tool that could be employed in the ESL classroom to help those students use the English language more fluently.

Besides the introduction and description of my research problem, I have discussed the relevance of the problem and the proposed solution through a literary review that embodies recent empirical studies carried out in this respect. My proposed solution emerged from the fact that students learn better when they are motivated (Tardif, 1992). Nowadays, students enjoy learning through technology tools. They join pre-school with a great facility for the use of smart phones, tablets and the internet; therefore, technology can have a positive impact on their learning (*Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation*, 2014). However, the problem remains in showing and demonstrating the direct impact of technology on the high school students' speaking skill.

In this respect, my study was conducted on a group of high school students in Quebec. It aimed at finding out the impact of technology on the development of their speaking skill in English. Hence, my study answered the following question:

What kind of impact can ICTs have on developing English speaking fluency for ESL students in a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal?

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After having presented the research problem and its context in Chapter 1, a detailed literature review based on research and empirical studies in relation to my topic is addressed in Chapter 2. The chapter ends with the two specific research questions that guided my study. Chapter 3, entitled *Methodology*, elaborates on the experimental research design and the Mixed Method Research paradigm that I chose to follow in conducting my study. Chapter 4 focuses on the presentation and analysis of results. The thesis ends with Chapter 5 that concludes my study by presenting a summary of the results, the contributions and limitations of the research, and future studies.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

After having presented the problem of my research and its context, I will describe in the following chapter the conceptual framework that defined my research strategy and the key factors or concepts under study. Then, I will proceed by discussing a literature review based on research and empirical studies in relation to my topic. The purpose of my literature review will be to look thoroughly into studies conducted by other researchers who have contributed to solving the same problematic situation as mine, and to look into how they tackled the problem that ESL students encounter while expressing themselves orally in English. The focus will be on how they applied ICTs as an intervention to solve the problem, the methodology they chose, as well as their findings. The chapter will end with the two specific research questions that guided my study.

2.2. Conceptual Framework

My conceptual framework elaborates on studies that have been conducted on a similar problematic situation to mine. This helped me plan my study and will guide me to know what is going on and why students face challenges when trying to express themselves orally in English. Through a thorough literature review, I was able to set clear goals, verify the efficiency of my solution, develop pertinent research questions, and choose a relevant research methodology.

The most important thing to understand about your conceptual framework is that it is primarily a conception or model of what is out there that you plan to study, and of what is going on with these things and why—a tentative theory of the phenomena that you are investigating. The function of this theory is to inform the rest of your design—to help you to assess and refine your goals, develop realistic and relevant research questions, select appropriate methods, and identify validity threats to your conclusions. It also helps you *justify* your research (Maxwell, 1996, pp. 33-34).

The conceptual framework helped me choose my research design and paradigm to figure out the impact of ICTs through the OpenLearning technology on the development of the speaking fluency of ESL students in the context of a francophone high school in Greater Montreal.

2.3 Definition of Key Concepts

In my study, the key concept will be the development of the speaking fluency or oral performance in English. I will try to show to what extent the intervention of ICT could improve the students' speaking fluency in the target language. Therefore, the independent variable will be the intervention that might exert an effect or a change on the dependent variable, speaking fluency. The pertinence of this independent variable will lie in its ability to make the researcher compare the students' competency of speaking English fluently before and after the use of the technology learning tool, thus verifying the effectiveness of this learning tool. As a consequence, it was primordial to define *speaking fluency* and *ICT*.

Many scholars define *Speaking Fluency*; however, in my research I adopted that of Richards, Platt and Weber (1985). Their definition is compatible with my research objective and the evaluation criteria that will be used as an instrument to evaluate the development of the participants' speaking skill. They defined fluency as "the feature which gives speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions" (Richards et al., 1985, p. 108). They further explained that in second and foreign language learning, fluency characterizes a learner's level of communication proficiency. Fluency is the learner's ability to

[...] produce spoken language with ease, speak with a good but not necessarily perfect command of intonation, vocabulary and grammar, communicate ideas effectively, and produce continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties or breakdown of communication (Richards et al, 1985, pp. 108-109).

This definition coincides with my research objective to study the development of the participants' English speaking skill that would help them interact orally with ease in everyday life situations without being necessarily preoccupied with perfect and accurate oral production.

In my study, the scores generated from the pre-intervention evaluation were the result of the students' oral interaction activity on *Bullying* done in class without the use of any technology tool. In this activity, the students were asked to put themselves in groups of 2 or 3 and share their opinions on the topic. They needed to agree/disagree and to justify their stance. This was a live oral interaction between peers done without any previous preparation.

Knowing that the online activity required of the students to voice/video record themselves giving their opinion on bullying and commenting on their peers' opinions on the subject, some students benefitted to rehearse or prepare before they posted their messages, which I find normal especially that I had no control over their participation from outside the classroom when using the OpenLearning platform. However, some other students went live without any previous preparation. Moreover, the interview was videotaped live without rehearsing. The learning and evaluation situation (appendix 7) and the evaluation grid described the competency targeted, interacts orally in English (Appendix 3), together with the evaluation criteria.

ICT (information and communications technology – or technologies) will be used as a tool that will engage the participants in interactive speaking activities inside the classroom and outside the classroom, on the OpenLearning platform. ICT is defined as

an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as video-conferencing and distance learning. (Rouse, 2005).

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The participants in the study used different types of technologies to engage in speaking activities: iPads, laptops, mobile phones, OpenLearning platform and the chat box, and YouTube.

2.4 Impact of ICT on Speaking

In my first chapter, I explained that my aim in this research was not only to find a solution to the problem of oral proficiency that my students encounter in their ESL classroom, but also to make English more practical and tangible. I wanted my students to improve their oral performance and to be able to use English in their daily lives each depending on their needs. I also justified my choice of technology as a pedagogical tool that helped them achieve this goal because such a tool meets their interests and preferences. In this chapter, I elaborated on studies that have discussed my problematic situation and have proven the pertinence and effectiveness of technological tools as a pedagogical intervention to solve the problem of speaking proficiency

that ESL high schoolers face. The review ended by showing some of the limits of the use of technology in the teaching and learning context. The following section includes current studies and findings related to the impact of technology on oral fluency.

A study conducted at Cinnabar Elementary school, in Petaluma, California, where 70% of the students are non-native English speakers, showed that technology, such as Skype and video-conferencing, gave learners the opportunity to communicate in real-time conversation with English speakers (Smart, 2008). Through this active social interaction, students were engaged and motivated; they were given a real opportunity to refine their basic English speaking skills and use language to negotiate meaning so that they could later use the target language in different social settings. Social online communication is “a way to bridge the inside-school world and the outside-school world [...] It suggests that there are several benefits to language learners from social online communication, such as more opportunities for expression and meaningful discourse than in face-to-face discussions, greater linguistic production overall, more student engagement, and more multidirectional (versus teacher-centered) interaction” (Smart, 2008, para. 17).

Volle (2005) conducted a project on the improvement of English oral skills in an online course for Spanish learners. The study aimed at showing whether a strictly online course based on recorded speaking activities, and internet mediated-conversations using MSN (Messenger) could improve the learners' English pronunciation and oral interaction in L2. The students were invited to record voice e-mails in two speaking activities and two real-time conversations, one before the start of the course and the other at the end of the course. “Three kinds of data were collected from the conversations: an articulation score (articulation = pronunciation, stress, and intonation), an accuracy score, and a proficiency score” (Volle, 2005, p. 146). The findings suggested gains in oral proficiency indicating that the main reason behind the improvement in oral proficiency was that the students were less focused on making accurate output or oral production, and more focused on keeping the conversation flowing (Volle, 2005).

Similarly, a recent study has shown that giving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners the opportunity to interact with technology tools and applications make learners pay more attention to form in ways that enhance L2 learning and speaking (Granena, 2016). A research held by Granena (2016) investigated text-based interaction rather than voice-based

interaction. The participants in this study were Spanish native speakers taking an online intermediate-level English course. The main objective was to study the impact of individual performance and interactive task performance in a computer-mediated environment on language development. Individual performance suggested that to communicate, students rely on individual performance through text-based communication, whereas interactive tasks suggested that students use voice-based interaction via chat tools, such as video-conferencing. The results of the study showed that “those participants under interactive task performance conditions outperformed participants under individual performance conditions” (Granena, 2016, p. 49).

Another recent quantitative study analyzed the impact of Language Learning Social Network Sites (LLSNS) on oral performance and interaction (Blake, 2016). The study focused on the use of Livemocha, a free LLSNS with the highest number of users among its competitors. Livemocha, that is no longer available for users, offered free tutorial software and opportunities to learn from and exchange with native speakers. The ESL adult learners, whose levels range between beginner and intermediate, had to create a personal profile on the site and choose the language they wished to study. Knowing that more than 160 hours of language-learning materials that include reading, writing, listening and speaking exercises were available on the site, students could also find language-exchange partners, add them as friends, and exchange information using voice- or text-based chat. Once the students completed a lesson, they posted their speaking and writing exercises with the aim of reviewing them, providing and receiving comments. The findings of this quantitative research project showed significant improvement in the English oral proficiency of the participants mainly because they had access to and the ability to communicate with native speakers of the target language (Blake, 2016). Interacting online with native speakers reduced anxiety and stress, enhanced motivation, provided authentic grounds for L2 socialization, and increased self-confidence.

Unlike learners in the traditional L2 classroom, which is often isolated from both, real-world contexts and long-term communicative engagement, our participants felt it was natural to engage in meaningful conversation with native speakers on the LLSNS. The increased motivation and self-confidence they reported vis-à-vis the target language suggests that LLSNSs may provide valuable opportunities for L2 socialization and engagement (Blake, 2016, p. 141).

A research study carried out in China and entitled *A research on a student-centered teaching model in an ICT-based English audio-video speaking class* (Lu, Hou & Huang, 2010) has been

of great interest to me for more than one reason. First, as in the *Programme de Formation de l'École Québécoise* (PFEQ), the teaching methodologies in China are student-centered and socio-constructivist.

The development and application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the field of Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) have had a considerable impact on the teaching methodologies in China. With an increasing emphasis on strengthening students' learning initiative and adopting a "student-centred" teaching concept in FLT, language teachers and researchers in China have resolved to explore effective and appropriate teaching models both in theory and practice. (Lu, Hou & Huang, 2010, p. 102)

With the teacher's guidance, Chinese students use learning strategies such as resourcing, cooperating, and interacting with others to develop their communicative language skills. Learning takes place in a computer-assisted language environment where students acquire the target language through communicating with the teacher and their classmates via various audio-recorded discussion tasks (Lu, Hou & Huang, 2010). The teacher was expected to adapt his/her method so as to take full advantage of ICTs to enhance their students' communicative language ability. The teacher was also expected to use ICTs in order to design authentic student-centered group activities so as to encourage student interaction in a socio-constructive environment. These activities including debates, dialogues, group discussions or video-based role-playing must relate to the students' everyday life (Lu, Hou & Huang, 2010).

Second, the study tackled the same problematic situation as mine. This research aimed at examining the impact of an English audio-video speaking class (EAVSC) on improving the students' communicative language ability (CLA). EAVSC involve speaking activities with the use of ICTs, effective communicative strategies, and student-centered methods. The objectives of the EAVSC were "to develop students' competence in understanding all kinds of language input in real-life communicative situations, and to improve their spoken language ability, so as to enhance their practical skills and communicative language ability" (Lu, Hou & Huang, 2010, p. 117). The feedback from the questionnaire given to 129 students on the effectiveness of the EAVSC in improving their listening and speaking competence was high. 17.07% said that the EAVSC was very helpful, 43.90% said that it was helpful, 37.40% said it was reasonably helpful, and 1.63% said that it was not helpful (Lu, Hou & Huang, 2010, p. 116).

Another quasi-experimental study entitled *A context-aware ubiquitous learning environment for language listening and speaking* conducted in Taiwan, discussed the problem of

listening and speaking skills for EFL seventh-grade students. The study tried to find a solution to this problem through the implementation of a ubiquitous ICT environment (Liu, 2009). I found the study interesting, pertinent and relevant to the problematic situation in my teaching context. The paper elaborated on the importance that English has become the most popular language in the world and the most important second language in non-English-speaking countries (Liu, 2009). I shared with Liu, the author of the study, the same concern about English teaching that

[...] is not connected with real-life; traditional English education tends to involve knowledge acquisition rather than life skills. [...] The frequency of English learning is low; students learn English only in English classes in traditional classrooms, and they have few opportunities to practice English outside the classroom without time and space limitations (Liu, 2009, p. 515).

The paper introduced mobile learning (m-learning) in order to integrate learning into the students' daily life. According to Liu, m-learning enabled students to interact at anytime and anywhere, enhanced motivation, encouraged them to learn a second or a foreign language, and cultivated "their ability to explore new knowledge and solve problems" (Liu, 2009, 515-517). The participants in the study were 13 to 15 years of age. They were randomly divided into two groups that used the same content: a control group that used traditional learning methods, and an experimental group that used HELLO (Hand-held Language Learning Organization). HELLO was a server connected to the internet. Teachers input materials and assessment into the HELLO database. Teachers could also review students' portfolios and give grades through the Portfolio Management Unit. Each student was given a mobile phone called a PDA (Personal Digital Assistance) connected to the server via a wireless local area network (WLAN). The software was designed with a Push Unit that delivers a daily English sentence to students' PDA phones in order to provide them with practical conversation materials. Students used their PDA to download learning material, play, watch, listen to songs, watch videos and interact with their peers and with their teacher. They could even use their PDA to take photograph barcodes and interpret the image as data. Students utilized the u-Speaker to interact with their virtual learning teacher (VLT) that appeared on the mobile phone (PDA). The system provided students with a u-Test tool (a software application) to take tests and evaluate their learning progress. All the learning records were uploaded into the Evaluation Database of the HELLO server, making them available for teachers to evaluate. The same tests were given to both groups. The study states a

pre-test, three tests and a post-test for both groups for 8 weeks. The tests evaluated the students' listening and speaking. Each test score ranged from 0 to 100. The results of the tests showed that the average grade of the experimental group in listening and speaking exceeded that of the control group (Liu, 2009). The study concluded that the HELLO environment helped in improving the learners' speaking and listening skills. "HELLO [...] provides effective learning resources and functions that assist the learning of English speaking and listening" (Liu, 2009, p. 525).

With the emphasis on socio-constructivist approaches in teaching and learning, Australian universities are focusing more and more on enhancing *oral communication skills* (expressed as *Oracy*), alongside with learning strategies such as cooperation, teamwork and interaction with others. The reason is that oral communication and its by-strategies have become indispensable in today's world of economy and enterprise. Another higher education preoccupation in Australia is shaping more authentic forms of assessment in order to make knowledge acquired at university more practical to the learners' workplace, personal life and civic life. Therefore, oral communication has become central to university classroom activities, knowing that Australia "now recruits almost one-fifth of its students from overseas, many of whom use English as an additional language (EAL)" (Doherty, et al., 2011, p. 28).

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This problem of oral communication, its role and complexities in the university program, teaching and assessment was discussed in a qualitative study conducted in Australia and entitled *Talking the talk: oracy demands in first-year university assessment tasks* (Doherty, et al., 2011). The paper defined 'Oracy' as "the ability to use the oral skills of speaking and listening and their interplay in verbal interaction" (Doherty, Kettle, May, & Caukill, 2011, p. 29). The qualitative study reported the results of two case studies. The participants were first-year university students who were divided into two courses depending on their choice of course in the Business School at the University. Course A was a traditional Business Management course in which students work in groups. The students in each group had to focus on oral interaction, such as on dialogue, tutorials and peer oral interaction to orally respond to the tutor's weekly business issue exercise. "The tutorials observed were conducted as teacher initiation/question, followed by student response, then teacher evaluation of that response, working through an oral marking of the weekly exercise" (Doherty, et al., 2011, p. 32).

Therefore, the success of the weekly exercise depended on active participation in discussions among peers and the tutor in order to understand the business issue and to solve problems. Hence, *Oracy* skills were implicitly targeted for students in Course A. Course B was designed to involve an explicit demand for *Oracy* skills in an information technology (IT) work setting. The latter included oral communication, teamwork, tutorials and workshops. Hence, Course B prioritized oral interaction for which the final task was to produce an oral presentation. Course A treated *Oracy* as a process for learning in a traditional setting, while Course B treated *Oracy* as a competence in an IT setting. The result was that the qualitative investigations in this study did not mean to show the difference or similarities between the two groups or which course is better or worse, but to show that when students were aware and convinced of the importance of talk and when the learning tasks were authentically linked to the learners' needs in authentic life situations, their oral skills were enhanced. The lecturer described "her overall approach as making the authentic link to industry explicit for students and highlighting the importance of talk as an integral part of work" (Doherty, et al., 2011, p. 35).

2.5. The Limitations of ICTs

Among the studies that I consulted, some showed a less positive impact of information and technology communications on the L2 learners' oral communication skills. A recent unpublished Master's degree study investigated whether the use of Information and Communications Technology can improve the oral communication skills in grade five and six English as a Second Language class (Gagnon, 2016). The research was conducted in Quebec and used a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) for data collection. After having observed, surveyed, videotaped and assessed the students for oral interaction in English, the author, interpreted the findings of her action research by showing that ICTs enhanced the students' motivation to communicate orally in English through the activities prepared by the teacher. However, "the use of information and communication technology only improved slightly the students' spontaneous use of English" (Gagnon, 2016, p. 1).

Another research conducted in Quebec (Karsenti & Collin, 2013) studied the advantages and the disadvantages inherent in the use of laptops at primary and secondary showed the constraints of the implementation of technology in the teaching-learning context. The qualitative

study that interviewed 389 teachers regrouped from 25 elementary and secondary schools of the Quebec School Board underlined six major challenges, described later in this paragraph, for the use of technologies in the classroom.

The results showed that 52.9% of the interviewed teachers explained that the efficient use of technologies necessitated up-to-date equipment available at all times in the classroom, 14.6% of them mentioned that the successful integration of technology in the classroom required a lot of preparation and time to create interesting pedagogical activities for the students, and 14% highlighted the effort to be done by the teachers to ensure a good classroom management. The teachers focused on the distraction that the internet can create for the students while doing an activity especially that they have access to social media that could digress them from the main objective of the lesson. The study reported that 7.4% of the teachers said that it was difficult to implement computer-based projects since the learners have unequal computer skills, 6.9% of the teachers said that they needed more training on the use of technology tools such as tablets, and 4.1% focused on the fact that immediate technical assistance is not always available in schools (Karsenti & Collin, 2013).

In the same line of ideas, Gagnon (2016) mentioned that technology could not always be reliable since a technical problem could arise anytime, and therefore, the teacher must always have a Plan B ready to replace a Plan A that integrated the use of technology. Gagnon mentioned that technology tools, such as laptops or Ipads or Computers, are mostly shared among a number of classes at schools. That is, they were not always available to be used anytime the teacher wanted (Gagnon, 2016).

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2.6. Research Objectives and Specific Research Questions

The main objective of my research is to show the functional role of ICTs in helping students in the context of a Francophone high school in Montreal speak English more fluently inside and outside the four walls of the second language classroom.

For Québec students, learning English as a second language (ESL) enables them to communicate with people who speak English in Québec, in the rest of Canada and throughout the world. [...] In the ESL classroom, students come to realize the importance of learning English for their future plans—personal, academic and professional [...] At the end of the ESL secondary school program, students will be able to communicate in

English in order to meet their needs and pursue their interests in a rapidly evolving society (MELS, 2006, p. 583)

According to the MELS, *Using Information and Communications Technology* is a methodological cross-curricular competency. This competency invites students to use ICTs tools to help them adopt effective work methods and communicate in a stimulating classroom environment (Gouvernement du Québec, 2006). To achieve my objective, I proposed ICT based speaking activities in the context of an ESL classroom in a Francophone high school in Montreal. In these activities, students used an ICT called OpenLearning as a stimulating and authentic tool that could help them speak English more fluently inside and outside the classroom through the use of ICT.

The main objective of my research is to show what kind of impact do ICTs have on English speaking fluency for ESL students in a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal.

The research questions that guided my research are the following:

1. To what extent does the use of the OpenLearning technology in the ESL classroom improve the speaking fluency of L2 learners in the context of a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal?
2. Does the use of OpenLearning serve to create a connection between the ESL classroom and the students' everyday life? If so, how?
3. What impacts does the application of the OpenLearning technology have on ESL students who face challenges speaking English fluently?

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2.8. Conclusion

Deriving from my conviction that the learning becomes meaningful when it can be transferred to authentic life situations, I consider that, nowadays, technology has become an interesting learning tool that can help connect the language classroom to the learner's everyday life. The main objective of my research is to show the functional role of ICTs in helping students in the context of a Francophone high school in Montreal speak English more fluently inside and outside the four walls of the second language classroom. Therefore, the study tries to answer the

following question: What kind of impact do ICTs have on English speaking fluency for ESL students in a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal.

Most of the literature review presented in chapter 2 show that ICTs play a functional role in the improvement of language learning in general, and in the enhancement of speaking fluency specifically Smart, 2008; Volle, 2005; Granena, 2016; Blake, 2016; Lu, Hou, & Huang, 2010; Liu, 2009. ICTs are pedagogical tools that could enhance the learners' motivation and could create a bridge between the ESL classroom and the real world, hence allowing students to practice their speaking in a real and authentic environment. Nevertheless, some other studies highlighted some limitations regarding the use of ICTs in the classroom, as their integration in the teaching-learning environment is not void of challenges (Karsenti & Collins, 2013; Gagnon, 2016).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter entitled *Methodology* elaborates on the research design and paradigm that I chose to follow in conducting my study. According to Paillé (2007), my research was experimental that tried to test the efficiency of the OpenLearning technology in developing the speaking fluency of ESL students in a francophone High School in Greater Montreal. The choice of the Mixed Methods Research (MMR) paradigm was directly related to the research design and objective and had, therefore, helped me answer the research questions expressed in chapter II. I will proceed by describing the group of students that participated in the study. I equally defined the tools and instruments that were used in operating my study. The chapter also includes an ethical section that ensures the respect of the participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the collected data. The chapter continues by describing the intervention and the procedure that was applied for data collection and analysis. The chapter also includes references to the appendices necessary to clarify the different sections of the chapter.

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3.2. Type of Research

Following the description of my research problem in relation with high school students in Quebec who encounter challenges in speaking English fluently in everyday life situations, I proposed technology as a pedagogical tool that could be employed in the ESL classroom to help those students develop their speaking fluency inside and outside the classroom or in everyday life situations. Therefore, according to Paillé (2007), my research was experimental that tried to test the efficiency of the OpenLearning technology in developing the speaking fluency of ESL students in a francophone High School in Greater Montreal. My study was an MMR type research incorporating a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative research and qualitative research differ on the basis of the method of data collection. The first produces numerical data or information that can be converted into figures or numbers, while the second produces narrative data. This approach to research is used to provide a better understanding of the research problem related to English oral fluency of some francophone students in a high school situated in Greater Montreal.

My research tried to figure out the impact of the OpenLearning technology on the development of the speaking fluency of ESL students in the context of a francophone high school in Greater Montreal. According to Paillé (2007), my research was experimental that tried to show the result that we can get when using OpenLearning, an ICT tool, to help the participants in this study develop their English speaking fluency inside and outside the four walls of the classroom.

La recherche-expérimentation, pour sa part, consiste en une mise à l'essai systématique et réflexive d'une stratégie, d'une méthode ou d'un produit. Il s'agit donc, comme son appellation l'indique, d'expérimenter, et, surtout, d'expérimenter dans un contexte scientifique. La démarche n'en est donc pas uniquement une d'expérimentation mais aussi de recherche, puisque l'un des objectifs majeurs demeure celui d'étudier, de comprendre, puis de communiquer les conditions mêmes de l'expérimentation (Paillé, 2007, p. 139).

The information produced by quantitative research is evaluated by means of standardized instruments. This is a formal, objective and systematic process that aimed at describing or verifying cause and effect relations and differences between variables (Fortin, 2015). It led me to formulate a question of interest and to identify the literature in order to determine what had been done my area of research. As a result, I was able to choose and develop a conceptual framework or operational structure that could support the concepts underlying my study. Quantitative research can verify a hypothesis and deduce its consequences (Fortin, 2015, p. 19-20).

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is more subjective and based on the interpretation of results which usually are meant to be generalized. It puts the focus on questions that produce information difficult to be collected through quantitative methods. It can include non-structured interviews or observations conducted to understand the perceptions, opinions or feelings of the research participants. Qualitative research is an inductive process derived from a careful analysis of individual situations and evolves towards a conceptual structure or general statements to explain the phenomenon in question (Fortin, 2015, p. 19-20).

The MMR approach helped me answer my research questions and meet my research objective which described the problem of my ESL high school students to speak English fluently inside and outside the classroom through the use of ICT. One of the MMR advantages is the possibility of triangulation, the use of three different types of data collection instruments: *a descriptive teacher evaluation grid, a structured interview and a student self-evaluation grid.*

Triangulation allowed me to identify the different aspects of the research problem, to analyze carefully the information provided by each instrument and to develop a better approach that aims at improving the problematic situation of English oral fluency in the context of a francophone high school in Greater Montreal. In this respect, my study focused on trying to improve this problematic situation in my ESL class through the implementation of OpenLearning. This technological intervention could help those students develop and improve their speaking fluency in English.

Therefore, my study tried to reveal the effect of ICTs on the students' speaking fluency. The ICT tools that were used in my research were laptops, ipads or mobile phones, YouTube videos, and OpenLearning, an online learning platform. The development of the students' speaking fluency was measured quantitatively by a descriptive teacher evaluation grid and a student self-evaluation grid. Both grids were designed to be compatible with the students' level, the pedagogical objectives to be achieved and the MELS (*Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement Supérieur*) core English program requirements and progression of learning. My study also applied a qualitative data collection method through a structured interview that I conducted with four of the participants in this study.

3.3 Participants

The school where my study was conducted is a high school situated in Greater Montreal. The school is multiethnic and accommodates around 1300 students most of which are immigrants: 48.3% of them are first generation immigrants, 39.7% are second generation immigrants and 12% are third generation immigrants or more. Therefore, many students join the school at the age of twelve or more and start with the francization program. Some ethnic groups, such as Greeks, Armenians, and East Indians have a good command of English since it is the second language spoken at home after their mother tongue.

The participants were high school students following the core English as a second language class, secondary cycle two (15 to 18 year-old-students). The group consisted of 34 participants, males and females, aged between 16 and 18 years from two secondary five classes. The two classes consist of 64 students of which 34 agreed to participate. All 34 students participated in all the speaking activities presented in the learning and evaluation situation described in Appendix 7. In addition, all the group participated in the pre and post English-speaking fluency evaluations and the self-evaluation which are the instruments that dealt with the data collection. Only four students out of 34 participated in the structured interview. I explained to the 34 participants that I need four of them to do an interview. Some students manifested their interest for the interview. It was clarified to the students who volunteered for the interview that for data collection and analysis purposes, only four will be chosen. As a result, the four students were selected for the interview based on level of achievement during the first intervention. The four students were from different ethnic communities: Quebecois, Spanish, Arabic and Armenian backgrounds. Therefore, the group of four participants in the interview was composed of mixed-ability level students that come from different ethnic communities. English was either their second or third language. The high school is situated in Greater Montreal. It is a Francophone school in the city of Laval where French is the language of instruction.

The English class was offered three times over a cycle of nine school days. Each class is 75 minutes long. The intervention took place over two cycles and a half or around seven periods over a period of two weeks. In the school, students had access to either laptops or ipads provided by the school. The English classroom is equipped with a teacher computer, internet and a smart

board. The students also have access to internet, laptops or ipads and dictionaries. They use a manual and a workbook that are compatible with the *Progression of Learning at the Secondary Level: English as a Second Language Core Programs* (Government of Quebec, 2010). The ESL core program at the secondary level focus on the development of three disciplinary competencies: interacts orally in English (competency 1), reinvests understanding of texts (competency 2) and writes and produces texts (competency 3).

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

The study comprised three instruments which I will describe below.

- a. Teacher Evaluation grid (Appendix 3): The pertinence of the evaluation grids lies in their ability to measure the development of the speaking skill of the students in question before and after the use of the technology learning tool, thus verifying the effectiveness of this learning tool. The empirical indicator used in my study was the scores resulting from the grid. The scores allowed the researcher to translate the degree of development of speaking fluency into concrete and measurable terms, and to classify this development into categories.

La mesure est définie comme l'ensemble des opérations empiriques, effectuées à l'aide d'un ou de plusieurs instruments de mise en forme de l'information, qui permet de classer un objet dans une catégorie pour une caractéristique donnée (Durand & Blais, 2003, p. 188).

In other words, the measure that I proposed allowed a numerical categorization: the development of the speaking skill in English was measured by the rate of success or by the grades that reflected the improvement or the non-improvement of the students' speaking fluency in English before and after the application of an intervention using technology chosen for a given task. The grid was constructed based on one of the evaluation criteria related to the development of the oral interaction competency described in the Quebec Education Program for ESL secondary cycle II core program (Government of Quebec, 2006c).

Students pay attention to the articulation of the message. They have a good command of functional language and use it in all contexts within the classroom. Students produce language that is relatively fluent—they produce some

stretches of well-structured speech that flow easily and smoothly with little hesitation when searching for words. They use some complex sentence structures and idiomatic expressions. They have achieved a level of accuracy in their language repertoire (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, intonation, pronunciation) such that errors do not impede understanding of their messages (Gouvernement of Quebec, 2006c, p. 16)

- b. Student Self-Evaluation grid (Appendix 4): A self-evaluation grid is a precise method of data collection. The pertinence of this instrument was that it constitutes various elements logically and empirically related between them.

Une grille d'évaluation est un système d'observation systématique destiné à recueillir des faits et dans laquelle sont déterminés de façon explicite les critères permettant de classer les différents comportements ou les unités d'observation dans des catégories mutuellement exclusives (Fortin, 2015, p. 324).

Those elements were set to measure a concept or a personal characteristic, and to evaluate the variables in question (Fortin, 2015). The student self-evaluation grid helps the researcher to evaluate the effect of the technological intervention on the development of the students' fluency based on the students' own perception. It also indicated their motivation and engagement in the speaking activities.

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- c. A Structured Interview (Appendix 5): The structured interview was designed by the researcher based one of the main objectives of the study elaborated in chapter 1. This objective is linked to the use of technological tools in the ESL classroom and to what extent they serve in creating a bridge between the ESL classroom and the students' everyday life. The pertinence of interviews was to create a direct contact between me, as the researcher, and the participants. The participants answered closed questions and seized the opportunity to justify their answers. This contact helped me collect information needed to understand the significance of the intervention lived by the participants in the study. The structured interview was planned to be conducted with four participants out of 34 participated. I explained to the 34 participants that I need four of them to do an interview. Some students manifested their interest for the interview, but I chose only four based on level of achievement during the first intervention. The four students were from different ethnic communities: a Quebecor, a Spanish, an Arabic and an Armenian. Therefore, the group of four participants in the interview was composed of

mixed-ability level students that come from different ethnic communities. The purpose of the interview is to find out if this omnipresent tool called technology can help the participants to speak English outside the classroom through the use of ICT which creates a bridge between the ESL classroom and the participants' everyday life outside school. The interview was video-recorded and transcribed. "*Un des avantages de l'entrevue dirigée est de permettre la comparaison des réponses des participants*" (Fortin, 2015, p. 326).

3.5 Learning Tools and Interventions

Three different technological tools were used in the study.

- a. YouTube: YouTube is a video-sharing website that the teacher was used to upload and share videos about *Bullying* on the OpenLearning platform.
- b. Laptops, ipads or mobile phones were used by the students to join the speaking class on the online platform and participate in its activities. The students used laptops or ipads in class. They used pads or mobiles outside the classroom, for example, at home to record their video comments and participate in the speaking class on the OpenLearning platform. These three tools were also used by the teacher to create the speaking activities on the platform.
- c. OpenLearning Online Platform: OpenLearning (www.OpenLearning.com) is an online learning platform that goes beyond content delivery to focus on meaningful learning inside and outside the classroom when the students are using the platform. Meaningful learning happens when the students are engaged, motivated and challenged. Meaningful or authentic learning can also happen when students use English in authentic situation.

The OpenLearning platform runs as a web-based social learning platform and mobile application. The goal is to provide a very social learning environment in which students feel empowered, deep learning experiences are fostered, students are intrinsically motivated, and passionate communities of practice flourish through well-designed constructive experiences. This has been realized with the latest social technology, and is designed for a global, connected society. OpenLearning provides authoring tools for educators to craft active learning modules that are combined with the platform's social mechanics and facilitation tools to create a highly engaging community experience. While the experience authoring tools allow for conventional teaching practices, these tools are specially designed to

promote the creation of constructive lessons which have rich interactions and active means for learners to share their experiences with one another [...]OpenLearning not only allows teachers to make their courses available online, but is also dedicated to ensuring that students participating in these courses have meaningful, engaging, constructive, and ultimately transformative learning experiences (Collien, 2017, para. 1, 2, 8).

d. Chat box is an in-box function available on the OpenLearning platform. This function was used by students to send private messages, oral or written, to their teacher or participants. The aim was to facilitate cooperation between the participants themselves and between the participants and their English teacher.

On OpenLearning, I uploaded a video on bullying in a high school context (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1CqaelVnkY>). The video shows different kinds of bullying and its consequences created my own online speaking class based on the learning and evaluation situation elaborated in Appendix 7. The class was designed to engage the participants in online speaking activities. Each student was invited to create their OpenLearning account.

In class, the students used laptops, ipads or mobile phones through which they were able to join the online speaking course on the platform. At home, they could also access the course either on their laptop, iPad or mobile phone.

After accessing the OpenLearning course, they read the module instructions and guidelines (Appendix 6). They watched the uploaded video on which they were asked to reflect and give their opinion. Their reflection was posted as a video or voice comment that they created and attached to the teacher's uploaded video.

Upon posting their voice/video recorded reflections, the students accessed a discussion forum that gave them the chance to watch their classmates' video recorded opinions and to comment on them. Knowing that the online activity required of the students to voice/video record themselves giving their opinion on bullying and commenting on their peers' opinions on the subject, some students benefitted to rehearse or prepare before they posted their messages, which I find normal especially that I had no control over their participation from outside the classroom when they are using the OpenLearning platform. However, some other students went live without any previous preparation.

Students were prepared for this speaking activity through a Learning and Evaluation Situation (LES) based on the Progression of Learning (Appendix 7). *Giving opinion, Identifying and Describing, Expressing Agreement and Disagreement, Reflecting and Giving feedback* are

all part of the “Secondary Cycle One and Cycle Two Core ESL programs. These are part of the Functional Language Repertoire section that consists of three elements essential to the development of students' linguistic competence in English: functional language, vocabulary and language conventions. “Functional language enables students to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts” (Progression of Learning, 2010, p. 7). In the same respect, functional language contributes directly to the development of the competency “*Interacts orally in English* and supports the development of the competencies *Reinvests understanding of texts* and *Writes and produces texts*” (Progression of Learning, 2010, p. 7).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

In the field of research, it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that his or her study meets the ethical criteria that protect and respect the rights, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants (Fortin, 2015). Therefore, the students' names mentioned in the study are pseudonyms used to protect the participants identities.

Before starting any intervention and data collection, I sent a letter to the school principal (Appendix 1). This letter included a clear description explaining the study, its pedagogical intent, its nature, its duration and ethical code in respecting the rights of the participants. The letter further explained that all collected data would remain confidential and would respect the participants' privacy. The aim of this letter was to ask for the school's permission before conducting the intended study in the classroom.

When the study was approved by the school, I sent a similar letter to the students and their parents (Appendix 2). This letter included a space for the parents to sign a consent form which was used to get parental approval for underage participants, and for the students to sign an assent form¹ which was used to get the agreement of minors to participate in the research, knowing that the participation in the study is voluntary, free and respects the persons' rights, privacy, well-being and justice. I explained to the participants the importance of respecting the private life of other participants when using videos and technology. The participants' assent also covered this critical aspect. In fact, some students declined to participate for different reasons for

¹ <http://www.uaf.edu/irb/faqs/consent-and-assent/>

which this study did not investigate. The only reason that I find worth mentioning about four students among those who did not agree to participate is their lack of confidence to engage in open oral discussions because they have speaking disorders or disabilities such a hearing deficit and stuttering. This was directly reported to me by these students who have an intervention plan in the school, besides a speech therapist. Of course, their participation could have helped configure the impact of technology on the speaking fluency of students who have learning disorders; however, this problem can be investigated in future studies.

3.7. Planned Interventions and Data Collection Procedures

In this section, I describe the planned activities (Appendix 7) and interventions that were carried out in the English classroom, as well as the activities that the participants would be doing outside the classroom on the OpenLearning platform.

Table 1:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Class #1</u> (75 minutes): The students are introduced to a learning and evaluation situation on <i>Bullying</i>. - The teacher describes the problem of Bullying in schools as follows: <i>Almost all students have witnessed a bully in action, and yet it is the most underreported problem in schools. Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending themselves. So, everyone needs to get involved to help stop it.</i> - The teacher explains the first activity and describes the targeted competency and the evaluation criteria: <p><u>Activity 1:</u></p> <p>In this activity, you will read a text about bullying and its impacts on students your age. You will then answer comprehension questions about the texts.</p> <p>Here is how you will evaluate yourself:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Competency 2: Reinvests understanding of texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did you answer all the questions correctly? - Did you use reading strategies to help you read and understand? <p>Instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work individually ➤ Read the questions before you begin to read the text. ➤ Look at all the text. Use the <i>Be Smart Strategies</i> that we have learned in class to help you read and understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take notes in the margin as you read. - Highlight and circle important information in the text using colors. 	42
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- Make inferences to answer the True or False questions.

- You may write notes on the test paper.
- Answer the questions after you read the text.
- Review your answers.
- Discuss and share your answers with your teacher and peers.

- **Classes #2 and #3** (150 minutes): The teacher evaluates the students' speaking fluency based on the evaluation grid provided to them (Appendix 3). This evaluation allows him/her to measure the students' oral performance.

COMPETENCY 1: INTERACTS ORALLY IN ENGLISH

Share your opinion about bullies and bullying!

In this activity, you will discuss as a group your ideas about bullies and bullying.

- **Your teacher will evaluate you on your oral interaction skill (C1) during this activity, so make sure that you *always speak English* and you follow the evaluation grid provided to you (Appendix 3).**

Instructions:

- Choose your group (2 or 3 students).
- Use the reading text and vocabulary in Activity 1 to answer the following questions:
 - Which type of bullying is the worst? Physical? Verbal? Social? Sexual harassment?
 - Which type do you find the most hurtful? Why?
 - If you were bullied, how would you react? Would you ignore the person or talk back? Would you tell a teacher?
- You need to give your opinion. You may agree or disagree but must give reasons why. You may use your notes.
- **Keep talking! Participate as much as possible!**

- **Class #4** (75 minutes): The students are introduced to the OpenLearning Platform www.OpenLearning.com. The teacher uses the smart board for this purpose.
- The students have access to laptops. Some have preferred to use their mobile phones, so they uploaded the OpenLearning application on their mobiles.
- Students are asked to create an account. The teacher has sent the students invitations to join the English-speaking class.
- The teacher guides the students on the Platform in order to make sure that they could use its different tools.
- The teacher shows the students how they can upload a voice or a video recording. This could be done in an Mp3/ Mp4 format. They can also use YouTube to create a recording and then uploaded it on the platform. Students who use mobiles or ipads can record via the camera, video or voice registration tools on their smart phone/iPad, then attach it on the OpenLearning platform. It is very similar to how they usually do to upload a photo or a video on social media.
- When everybody is ready, the teacher shows the video uploaded on the OpenLearning Platform

that discussed *Bullying*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1CqaelVnkY>

- The teacher gives the students homework (Appendix6):
- Follow the instructions below to participate on the OpenLearning Platform.
www.OpenLearning.com/courses/battling-bullying
- Use your class notes and the video that your teacher has shown in class. React to the video by answering the following questions:
 1. What kind(s) of bullying you see in the video? Name them and define them.
 2. How would you react if you were bullied that way?
 3. What can you do to change the situation in your school?
 4. What advice would you give to the bully?
- You should record yourself giving your opinion through voice or video. SPEAK ENGLISH !

How you will be evaluated:

- Your teacher will evaluate you based on the evaluation grid provided to you (appendix 3)
- When you complete the activity, you are invited to evaluate your participation. (appendix 4).

- d. **Class # 5** (75 minutes): The students are asked to evaluate their own work and their learning experience based on a self-evaluation grid (Appendix 4). When done, the teacher asked the students to sit in pairs and share their opinions verbally in class on the initial video on bullying and their learning experience on the OpenLearning platform. Then, the teacher gave them an assignment; to go online and comment on one of their peer's video or recording. Their comments have to be done verbally through a voice or a video recording.

- **Class #6** (75 minutes): During his/her working hours, the teacher checks the students' oral performance on the OpenLearning platform. He/she evaluates the students' speaking fluency in the voice/video recording posted on the platform. The evaluation is based on the criteria presented in Appendix 3. The teacher leaves a word of encouragement to each participant on the platform.
- During class #6, the teacher provides each student with a number grade over ten. This grade is the result of their oral performance on the OpenLearning platform (Table 2). The teacher gives an oral feedback to the group and congratulates them for their engagement and perseverance.

- e. **Periods #6 and #7** (During lunch time): The teacher interviewed four students that helped the researcher collect information needed to understand the significance and the effect of the ICT intervention experienced by the participants in the study.

-The interviewees were given individual appointments during lunchtime.

-The interview was done in English.

- The interview was structured. The four students were asked nine questions. All four were asked the same questions. The interview included pre-set closed questions (Appendix 5).

- The interview was video recorded and transcribed in detail. Each recording was 10 to 15 minutes

long.

3.8. Data Analysis

After having collected the data, a quantitative analysis was conducted through two instruments; a Descriptive Teacher Evaluation Grid (Appendix 3) and a Student Self-Evaluation Grid (Appendix 4). The numerical results collected from the two grids will be presented in two histograms respectively. A third instrument was planned to be a Structured Interview (Appendix 5) with four participants. The data collected from the latter will be presented and analyzed qualitatively.

The analysis of the data derived from the Teacher Evaluation Grid was reported through percentages. The pre- to post- evaluations were coded in percentages and the results of both evaluations were compared to find out whether the use of the OpenLearning technology could impact the development of the students' speaking fluency. My analysis of the results was based on two criteria: the production of accurate speech in English and the production of fluent speech in English. Each criterion was worth five marks over ten.

When evaluating the students based on the first criterion which was the production of accurate speech in English, I focused on the students' ability to express themselves in English using a speech that could be understood by someone who speaks English. This does not mean that I expected from the students an oral production that was void of errors, but rather a comprehensible speech in which the errors did not impede the understanding of the message expressed by the students. Therefore, a student was allotted five marks when he/she produced speech that is clear and contained only a few minor errors. A student was given four marks if she/she produced speech that was clear with some errors that did not impede understanding. A student was given three marks if he/she produced speech that was understood with some interpretation. A student was allotted two marks if they produced speech that was mostly difficult to understand.

When evaluating the students based on the second criterion which was the production of fluent speech, I focused on spontaneous and smooth flow of speech with little or with no hesitation. Therefore, a student was given five marks when his/her speech flowed easily and smoothly with no hesitation. A student was allotted four marks when his /her speech flowed

easily and smoothly with little hesitation. A student was given three marks when his/her speech flowed despite some hesitation. A student was allotted two marks when his/her speech was often impeded by hesitation.

Based on the same evaluation criteria mentioned above, the students' oral performance was evaluated twice; before and after the use of the OpenLearning technological tool. This helped me compare the students' oral production to understand the impact of this technological tool on the development of their English-speaking fluency.

The data retrieved from the Student Self-Evaluation Grid was represented by a histogram. A histogram is an interval scale of measurement illustrated by a graphic representation. This technique was used to classify the information with respect to the numbers assigned to the variables (Fortin, 2015). The information collected from the self-evaluation grid was meant to show the impacts

The self-evaluation grid was meant to disclose the impact of the OpenLearning technology on the students' English-speaking fluency through their own perspective. This grid evaluated the frequency and the degree of the students' engagement in the speaking activities, their motivation when using technology to speak English inside and outside the school, their anxiousness when recording themselves speaking in English and their perseverance when speaking this language. The information collected from the self-evaluation grid helped learn about the impact of the OpenLearning technology on the development of the participants' fluency, motivation, anxiety, and engagement based on their own perception.

The data collected from the interview was analyzed qualitatively. The analysis of content is a qualitative technique used to treat textual data (Fortin, 2015). The analysis of the interview content was video recorded and transcribed. The analysis answered the research question related to whether the use of the OpenLearning technology helped the students speak English outside the classroom when using ICT. The nine interview questions (Appendix 5) were meant to show whether the OpenLearning technology served to create a bridge between the ESL classroom and the students' everyday lives. The students were given the chance to describe their overall learning experience when using technology in the English class with the aim of improving their speaking fluency. The interview questions collected information that was able to disclose the

challenges that the four francophone high school students face when speaking English, their need to speak English outside the school, the omnipresence of technology in the four students' everyday lives, and the motivation that technology ensures in their life as teenagers. The interview created a direct contact between me, as a researcher, and the four participants. The data collected helped me understand the significance of the link between technology and the learning experience of francophone high school students who needed to develop their English fluency inside and outside the classroom through the use of ICT.

The triangulation strategy helped me answer my research questions and meet my research objective which is to help my ESL high school students speak English more fluently inside and outside the classroom through the use of ICT. The use of three different types of data collection instruments: *a descriptive teacher evaluation grid, a structured interview and a student self-evaluation grid* allowed me to identify the different aspects of the research problem, to analyze carefully the information provided by each instrument and to develop a better approach that aims at improving the problematic situation of English oral fluency in the context of a francophone high school in Greater Montreal. In this respect, my study was conducted quantitatively and qualitatively and focused on trying to improve the problematic situation of my students, who face challenges speaking English fluently, through the implementation of OpenLearning, a technological intervention that can help the students develop and improve their speaking fluency in English.

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3.9. Conclusion

Chapter 3 described the methodology that the study followed to meet the research objectives and answer the research questions. The main aim of this chapter was to give an idea of how I chose my research methodology and how I proceeded to conduct my research. In this chapter, I also described the participants and the context in which the study was conducted. I gave a detailed description of the planned interventions, the data collection procedures, tools, instruments and data analysis. I assured that the study fully respected the ethical code in research. The following chapter on the presentation and analysis of the collected data helped me find out to what extent the OpenLearning technology can impact the speaking fluency of ESL students in a francophone high school in Montreal.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

The main objective of my research was to show what kind of impact do ICTs have on English speaking fluency for ESL students in a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal.

The research questions that guided my research were the following:

1. To what extent does the use of the OpenLearning technology in the ESL classroom improve the speaking fluency of L2 learners in the context of a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal?
2. Does the use of OpenLearning serve to create a connection between the ESL classroom and the students' everyday life? If so, how?
3. What impacts does the application of the OpenLearning technology have on ESL students who face challenges speaking English fluently?

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4.2. Research Question 1: Teacher Evaluation Grid and Analysis

The question was: To what extent does the use of the OpenLearning technology in the ESL classroom improve the speaking fluency of L2 learners in the context of a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal?

The Descriptive Teacher Evaluation grid (Appendix 3) was used to measure the development of the speaking skill of the participating students before and after the use of the technology learning tool. In this section, I presented the scores resulting from this grid.

The scores helped me to translate the degree of development of the speaking fluency into more concrete and measurable terms, and to classify this development into categories (Durand & Blais, 2013). In other words, comparing the before and after numerical grades resulting from the same Descriptive Teacher Evaluation grid (Appendix 3) allowed me to measure the development

of the speaking skill in English. The grades reflected the improvement or the non-improvement of the students speaking fluency in English before and after the application of the intervention.

4.2.1 Results Before and After the OpenLearning Intervention

The results of the evaluation of the English speaking skill of 34 secondary five students before and after the use of the OpenLearning platform as an ICT tool are presented in this section.

I evaluated the students' speaking fluency based on the evaluation grid provided to the 34 participants (Appendix 3). This evaluation allowed me to measure the students' oral performance. The scores generated from the pre-intervention evaluation were the result of the students' speaking fluency performance in the oral interaction activity on *Bullying* done in class without the use of any technological tool. Based on the same evaluation grid (Appendix 3), I evaluated the individual student speaking fluency performance in the voice or video recording that they posted on the online platform. Therefore, the post-intervention scores were the results generated after the use of the OpenLearning platform as an ICT tool. The following table 2 allowed the teacher to compare the students' pre and post speaking fluency results, to translate the degree of development of the speaking fluency into concrete and measurable terms, and to classify this development into categories (Durand & Blais, 2013).

The students' names mentioned in Table 2 were pseudonyms used to protect the participants identities. Based on the Descriptive Evaluation Grid in Appendix 3, the minimum grade that a student could receive was 0/10 and the maximum grade was 10/10 knowing that the passing grade was 6/10. The students were evaluated based on two criteria: production of speech and fluency. For the production of speech in English, each participant had to express their opinion on the subject of bullying with clear and complete thoughts. The quality of speech production in English was evaluated based on a scale that ranged from 0 to 5 points (Appendix 3). For fluency, each participant had to interact in English fluently and smoothly without hesitation as much as possible. Hesitation while interacting in English was tolerated provided that it did not impede the understanding of the thought expressed by the student. Fluency was evaluated based on a scale that ranged from 0 to 5 points (Appendix 3). Grammar, structure and pronunciation errors were tolerated provided that they did not impede understanding. A student was allotted a zero mark in two cases; if he/she did not participate in the interaction in the oral interaction or if he/she spoke in a different language than English. It is worth mentioning that

none of the participants was allotted a zero mark because everybody participated in the oral interaction using English.

The results of the pre and post evaluations of the three students to whom the technological intervention had presented no impact showed that those fluent students were capable of speaking English fluently regardless of the context. These results might also mirror the importance of the geographic location of the school, and the linguistic and ethnic diversity in Greater Montreal. It is worth mentioning that the school where the data was collected is multiethnic and some students of Greek, Armenian and Indian origins speak English outside the school, mainly at home. This factor was reported by some students such as Salpi in her interview with me.

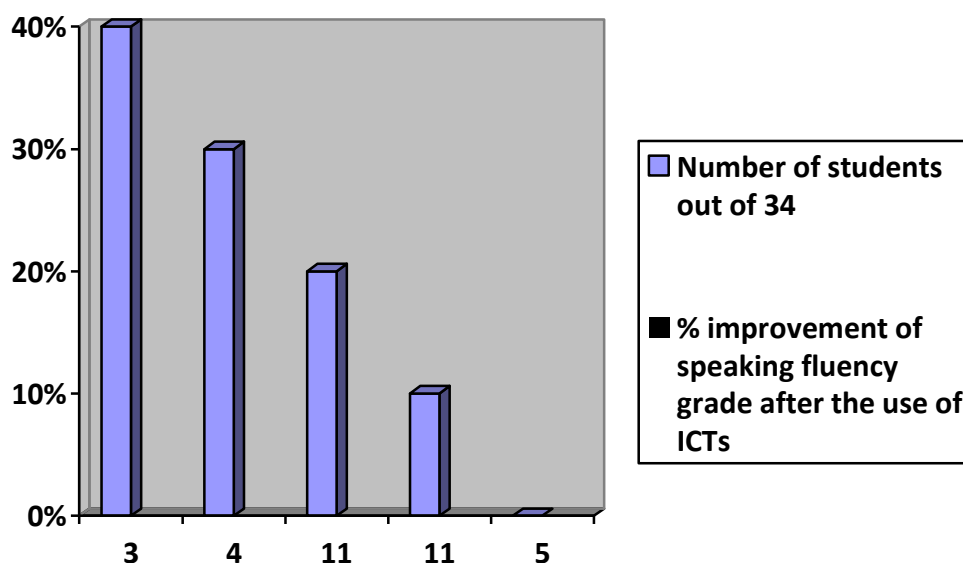
Table 2: Results of the teacher evaluation of the speaking skill before and after the application of ICTs

STUDENT PSEUDONYM	Speaking grade BEFORE the use of ICTs	Speaking grade AFTER the use of ICTs
Wisal	8	9
Amine	10	10
Aliyan	10	10
Hajjar	6	9
Samuel	7	8
Maria	7	8
Achraf	6	9
Prabhjot	7	9
Mareen	8	10
Sonampreet	8	10
Édouard	8	9
Amélie	7	10
Mélodie	7	9
Amira	7	8
Jeyson	7	9
Alexandre	6	10

Benjamin	8	9
Ana-Maria	8	10
Mahrajuddin	9	10
Rose	8	8
Thierry	5	7
Kain	9	10
Thomas	8	10
Javier	7	8
Dianna	6	10
Nicholas	8	10
Adama	6	9
Salpi	10	10
Paul	8	9
Zahoua	5	9
Carla	6	8
Sabrina	8	10
Munib	9	9
Ralph	5	7

When comparing the students' English speaking results before the use of ICTs and after the use of ICTs shown in Table 2, I concluded that none of the participants had a negative impact from the intervention in these results. The technological intervention in the given speaking activities has shown a positive impact on 29 students out of 34, whose grade in speaking has improved; a neutral impact on 5 students out of 34, whose grade did not show any difference with or without the use of ICTs.

Graph 1 below deciphered in percentages the impact of ICTs on the speaking fluency grade that the students obtained after the technological intervention.

Graph 1:

The final mark of three students out of 34 has improved by 40% after the application of ICTs, four students out of 34 have shown a 30% improvement in their English speaking fluency when their grade before the use of ICTs was compared to their grade after the use of ICTs, the grade of 11 students out of 34 has shown improvement in English speaking since the use of ICTs has helped them improve their fluency by 20%, the grade of 11 students out of 34 by only 10% after the use of ICTs, whereas five students out of 34 showed no grade difference when evaluating their performance before and after the application of technology. The results, in general, showed a positive effect of OpenLearning, as an ICT tool, on the students' oral performance.

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4.2.2 Observation and Analysis

The results presented in section 4.2 showed an improvement of the speaking fluency of more than half of the students participating in this research after using the OpenLearning platform. The results also show a slight improvement of the speaking skill of 11 students, and no impact of the OpenLearning technology on the speaking fluency of five students. The analysis of these results was based on the evaluation criteria described in the previous section and in Appendix 3, on my knowledge of the school context and the participants since I am the teacher and the

researcher who wants to help her students speak English more fluently, and on what the participants reported to me either orally or through a message they left on the OpenLearning platform.

Based on my experience as a teacher, I could say that the context is a variable that affected the element of anxiety or stress which played an important role in this study. Despite the fact that both evaluations, before and after using the OpenLearning technology, were based on the same criteria, yet the speaking activity done without the use of technology was a live interaction in which the students gave their opinion about bullying using direct or live speech production in class. The same speaking activity done through the OpenLearning platform was based on a video or a voice message recorded at home. In the first case, the students were engaged in a live discussion where they shared their opinions and gave their reflections on the topic spontaneously. In this pre-intervention participation, the students interacted in groups in class; their opinions were based on a direct reflection in a public context. In this case, some students reported to have been anxious about their performance in English. They concentrated more on the production of accurate speech within their circle of discussion so that their opinion could be understood by their peers and by the teacher.

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In the second case, the students used the OpenLearning platform at home to react and give their opinion about the same topic, bullying. The oral performance in the post-intervention was less stressful since the students were in a comfortable and private context and had more time to prepare themselves before they posted their final recording. They could even try a recording, delete it, and then retry to record themselves several times before they decide to post the best performance on the OpenLearning platform, according to them. Alexandre, for example, posted a message on the platform saying that he has prepared himself before posting his reflection. In this case, students felt less stressed about performing accurate speech in public and focused more on the production of fluent and continuous speech.

It is good to mention that the OpenLearning application has somehow similar functions as any other social media platform. The participants and the teacher downloaded the OpenLearning application on their mobile phones. It happened that the 34 participants had mobile phones on their possession which helped them connect with the English class on the OpenLearning platform after class hours, outside the school, anytime they wanted. The

participants could use the private messaging function to inbox each other and/or their teacher. Through this chat box function, they had the chance to send their teacher an oral or written private message about the oral task, about a difficulty they are facing on the platform or about a concern related to their performance. They could also send their classmates a private message to ask for technical assistance on the platform, for instance. The teacher could answer their questions and could send words of encouragement to motivate them.

The OpenLearning application created a link between the students and the teacher during class hours at school and outside the class hours when everybody leaves school in the afternoon. It helped them speak or write in English outside the class hours to solve a real problem or concern about an oral performance difficulty they were facing or about a technical problem that was hindering them from uploading their contribution on the platform. It is true that all these problems were related to the English course, but such technological tool, which is very similar to any other social media application, can help students use English to chat or to solve a problem they are facing in their life. We have to admit that nowadays on social media such as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, we can connect with employers to find a job, buy and sell objects, find a good travel deal and much more.

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Therefore, the OpenLearning mobile application encouraged the students to practice their English fluency and use English as a language inside and outside the school hours either to cooperate or to solve a problem they were facing on the platform. This is what I call an authentic experience. It is when a student uses the language that he is learning in class outside the class hours to fulfil a need. In this case, the need was to cooperate, to solve a technical problem or to improve oral production. However, these needs could become different when it comes to life outside a school context. Students need to speak English to find a job, to buy and sell, to connect with people, for example. Moreover, the chat box private messaging had created a relationship of confidence and cooperation between the students and their teacher. This relationship which was based on confidence and cooperation enhanced the feeling of engagement and belonging to the English class inside and outside the school; it connected the whole group of participants and their teacher to a course of cooperation, interaction, fun and confidence inside and outside the class hours.

Some students, ten out of 34, who showed slight improvement reported that recording themselves speaking English is as stressful as speaking in class because they find it weird talking to a camera or recording their own voice. Samuel, for example, sent the following message on the OpenLearning chat box (the message is reported and copied textually as posted by the student):

*miss I'll post my voice on what I think but I don't think I made really well.
I wasn't comfortable to talk to my computer and I just rather like talking to
real person so I hope it won't affect that much my grades. I'm sorry for
being late on my post I couldn't do it yesterday*

It is worth mentioning that four students, who are not part of the 34 participants in this study, have decided not to participate. These students encounter speaking disorders or learning disabilities and have intervention plans at school created by Technicians in Special Education and other specialists to help them meet the requirements of the curriculum. I realised that these students have the right to technology tools, such as SpeakQ and WordQ, as part of their intervention plan. Their participation in my project could have been an asset to my research objective. Their decision not to participate in the research hindered me from collecting important data that could have helped manifest some crucial results regarding the usefulness of technological interventions on making an impact on the students with learning difficulties or disabilities to improve their speaking fluency.

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4.3. Research Question 2: Interview Results and Analysis

The second research question was: Does the use of OpenLearning serve to create a connection between the ESL classroom and the students' everyday life? If so, how?

I tried to find an answer to the above question through a structured interview (Appendix 5) with 4 participants: Benjamin (P1), Achraf (P2), Javier (P3) and Salpi (P4). The students' answers to the nine interview questions will be transcribed and reported in the following section 4.3.1 without any interpretation from my end. The answers are presented as reported speech. My analysis and interpretation to their answers will be discussed in section 4.3.2.

4.3.1 Answers of the Four Participants to the Nine Interview Questions

Q 1: You have participated in the speaking activities via the OpenLearning Platform. Can you describe your overall experience?

- P1 says that OpenLearning is a new learning experience for him. He is more used to participating in oral discussions in class rather than through a technological tool or a computer. In the beginning, he found it difficult to speak to a screen, but with some practice, he was able to use the platform.
- P2 says that he usually feels shy to speak English in front of people, and the OpenLearning platform helped him overcome this problem and motivated him to speak English with other people. It also helped him practice his English because he does not usually speak English in class.
- P3 says that OpenLearning is a new experience for him. It helped him become more open to speaking English in public because he is usually shy to express his opinion in front of everybody in the class.
- P4 says that she learned English at a young age through movies. OpenLearning is a new way to learn. To her, the platform was easy to use, and she liked it. She and her friends decided to make a short movie describing different types of bullying. They filmed in different places outside the school, such as her friend's home and in the street. They used different technologies such as the iPad , YouTube and OpenLearning.

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Q 2: Is French your mother tongue or first language?

- P 1: Yes
- P2: No: he says that French is his second language and Arabic is his first. He continues to say that he speaks Arabic at home.
- P3: No: French is his third language. Spanish is his first language and English is his second.
- P4: No: French is her third language. English is her second. Salpi is Armenian, she speaks 6 languages and she is learning Spanish now.

Q 3: How often do you speak English outside school?

- P1: Sometimes: P 1 says that despite the fact that he speaks French at home, yet he finds English as a need especially in his life as a hockey player. He continues to say that he speaks English when he goes on tournaments to Ontario.
- P2: never at home, but sometimes at work and with friends: he finds that English is a need because he works as a lifeguard as he sometimes needs to speak English or give instructions in English to swimmers. He continues to say that he uses English to communicate with his friends who live in the States.
- P3: Always: especially at work.
- P4: Always

Q 4: Where do you usually use ICTs?

- P1: at home and at school
- P2: at home and at school
- P3: at home and at school: everywhere
- P4: at home and at school: she uses Moodle in Math and Science

Q 5: How often do you use ICTs (mobile, internet, laptop, iPad ...)?

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- P1: always at home and sometimes at school
- P2: always at home and sometimes at school
- P3: always at home and at school: he says that he downloaded the OpenLearning application on his mobile phone.
- P4: Always: she downloaded the OpenLearning on her mobile.

Q 6: Do you enjoy using ICTs in the English class?

- P1: Yes: he believes that learning how to use technology and using technology in school has become a need and a must. He appreciates that his English teacher uses technology in class and hopes that other teachers will start focusing on the use of technology in their courses. In his opinion, technology nowadays is used everywhere and has to be used in class to help students improve and progress at school and outside school since people can no more do anything without it.
- P2: Yes: he enjoys using ICTs in the English class. He says that it facilitates learning and enhances understanding.

- P3: Yes: he enjoys using ICTs in the English class. He finds it interesting to continue having online courses.
- P4: Yes: she liked it because it is a new technology tool to her. She used the chat box on OpenLearning to ask the researcher questions about the speaking activities.

Q 7: In the OpenLearning activities, you used the internet, your laptop, your mobile and/or your iPad. Where did you use the OpenLearning Platform?

- P1: outside school
- P2: inside and outside the school
- P3: outside the school: mainly at home when he is in his own 'bubble'.
- P4: outside the school.

Q 8: How did the OpenLearning Platform activities and the video recording help you speak more fluently outside the classroom (when using the platform outside the school hours)?

- P1 says that the OpenLearning helped him improve his English fluency since it gave him the space to search for words, do some research about the topic and to think about it before he goes online to post his opinion on the platform. He wishes that this online class would continue so he would have the chance to participate more and practice more and more his English. Benjamin believes that technology, nowadays, has become a must and a need to be used everywhere.
- P2 says that the OpenLearning helped him improve his English fluency because it motivated him to speak English outside the school and encouraged him to speak English with his classmates. Moreover, Achraf says that the OpenLearning experience helped him practice his English fluency because he had the chance to prepare and practice the recording more than once. He posted the recording on the platform only when he felt satisfied with his performance.
- P3 says that the OpenLearning helped him more or less speak English more fluently outside the classroom. Javier says that he has no difficulty speaking English, but a challenge to speak English in class. Therefore, OpenLearning helped him feel more comfortable and less stressed about mistakes when giving his opinion on the platform. He even had the chance to ask a friend for help, prepare and practice his answer before posting it.

- P4 says that the OpenLearning helped her more or less speak English more fluently outside the classroom. She says that she had no problem speaking English, but she was a bit nervous while filming.

Q 9: Can you describe some of the disadvantages of using the OpenLearning Platform ?

- P1: To him, the only disadvantage was distraction. While he was working on his computer to participate on the platform, he was tempted by social media and YouTube. So, he would interrupt his studies to go check a Facebook notification, for example. Therefore, instead of finishing his work on time, he got carried away by other online distractions.
- P2: To him, the activity was time consuming. He pointed that it took him a lot of time to finish the activity, about one hour and a half.
- P3: To him, the only disadvantage was in the beginning because he found it difficult to use the application. However, once he got used to it, he felt more comfortable with it.
- P4: To her the only disadvantage was that in the beginning she had problems downloading the application.

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4.3.2 Observation and Analysis of the Students' Interview

Based on the interview answers, the four participants said that using technology to learn is one of their preferences. They find that OpenLearning is an interesting experience and a new way to learn. The four participants use ICTs inside and outside school for various needs and purposes. They confirmed that they used the OpenLearning platform mainly outside the school hours to participate in the speaking activities.

4.3.3 Participant 1: Benjamin

Benjamin uses ICTs inside and outside school. He believes that technology is a need. It is omnipresent in our lives; therefore, we need to learn how to use it as students. He also finds that teachers who prefer not to use technology in their courses make things more difficult to their

students and to themselves. He says: “*we live in a world where technology is all around us, like I said. And if we don’t know how to use it, we are doomed.*” Despite the fact that he does not always speak English in his daily life, yet he finds that learning English is important since he sometimes needs to use it when he plays hockey. Therefore, English fluency and the use of technology together do not only fulfill a need in his life but also create a bridge between his life as a school student and his life as a person and a hockey player who has aspirations for achieving future goals and ambitions.

4.3.4 Participant 2: Ashraf

For Ashraf, speaking English in class is a challenge because he feels shy speaking in front of the whole class. The OpenLearning platform encouraged him to participate in the speaking activities required in the ESL course without having to feel anxious. He took his time to prepare what he wants to say, he practiced and then posted his opinion on the platform knowing that the audience is still his classmates, though. Knowing that I had no control on the students’ participation outside the class hours, some students, like Ashraf, benefitted from the fact that the oral contribution must be recorded to practice their oral production performance before posting their final contribution on the platform. I find this very normal especially that students would do so, especially that practicing is to the advantage of the student; it helps him/her listen to their performance, learn from their mistakes and develop their speaking skill. However, in real-life situations, speaking is often done spontaneously and directly without any previous preparation, and the audience is not always a classmate or a friend. However, in the case of Ashraf, the aim was to speak English more fluently with practice. So, the OpenLearning technology helped him transfer the ESL classroom to a more comfortable zone to him and helped him achieve his goal outside the school.

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4.3.5 Participants 3 and 4: Javier and Salpi

Javier and Salpi have downloaded the OpenLearning application on their phones which allowed them to use English and to follow the English class activities in different places outside the school. The OpenLearning platform helped Javier transfer the English class and activities to a

more comfortable zone which he calls ‘my bubble’. Despite his challenge to speak English openly in front of his classmates inside the classroom, he was able to speak and practice his English with ease and confidence in his own ‘bubble’. Javier needs to speak English at work, so he thinks that the platform has given him the chance to practice his speaking fluency because it has provided him with the space to prepare himself and ask questions before he communicates his opinion.

Salpi in her short movie was able to transfer the English class to the world of acting and movie making; a world that she likes. Despite the fact that the students were not asked to create a movie for the oral interaction activity on the platform, Salpi and her friends decided to film a short movie describing the different kinds of bullying. They believed that acting in a movie is a form of oral interaction. Similar to the interpretation of Ashraf’s performance, this kind of interaction is also prepared and not spontaneous since the students rehearse before finalizing the movie. The movie setting was at her friend’s home and in the street. Salpi does not have any problem speaking English in class because she is fluent. However, the use of ICTs has helped her participate in the speaking activities required in her ESL course through making a movie project. Hence, she fulfilled the course requirements based on her interests as a person, and that was translated into an activity done with the help of technology outside her school hours.

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Some participants including Salpi used the chat box on the platform to ask questions and receive answers regarding the activities. This chatting space helped create a contact between the students and their teacher outside the four walls of the classroom.

Despite the different some criticism mentioned regarding the OpenLearning technology, all four participants appreciated the use of ICTs in their learning process. They enjoyed using a new tool to learn. Whether the participant had or did not have a challenge speaking English, he or she was able to speak English via the OpenLearning platform outside the school, at their own pace and through their own preference. Three participants fulfilled their different needs to speak English outside the school with the help of the OpenLearning technology: Benjamin when playing hockey, Achraf at work and with friends, and Javier at work. What is more important is that each one of them was the center of attention in this learning process. They were partners in making the decision. Each participant decided for herself or himself where, when and how to participate in the speaking activities. They completed the speaking task, respected the evaluation

criteria and the deadlines. Therefore, I realised that the OpenLearning platform did not only create a bridge between the ESL classroom and the outside world, but also pinpointed the fact that students find that speaking English is a need. Using technology inside and outside school is a must nowadays, and learning in a comfortable context and at their own pace is a preference that encourages them to speak English.

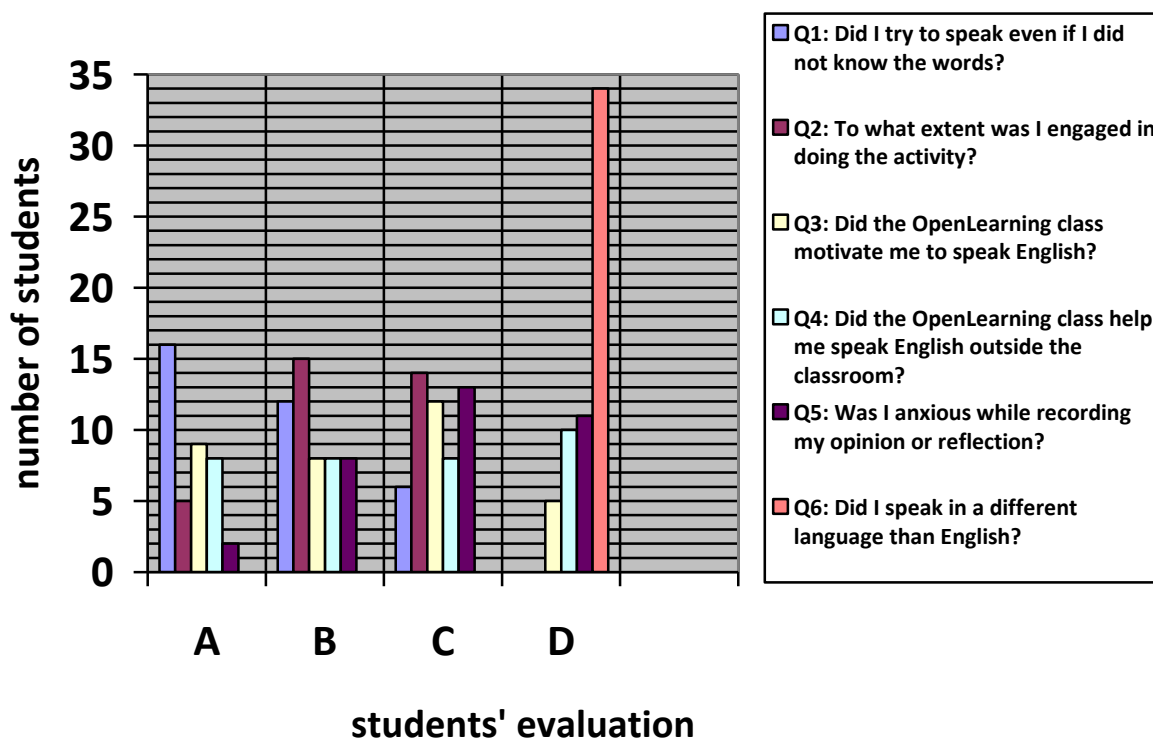
4.4 Research Question 3: Student Self-Evaluation Grid Results and Analysis

4.4.1 Presentation of results

The research question was: What impacts does the application of the OpenLearning technology have on ESL students who face challenges speaking English fluently?

In this section, I presented the results drawn from the student self-evaluation grid (Appendix 4). The self-evaluation grid helped me to evaluate the impact of the OpenLearning technology on the development of the participants' fluency, motivation, anxiety, and engagement based on their own perception. The different colors on the histogram (Graph 2) represented the six questions of the student evaluation grid; the questions are described in the legend below. The number of students who participated in the self-evaluation is 34. The letters A, B, C and D stood for the different degrees of frequency: A=All the time; B=Most of the time; C= Sometimes; D=Never.

Graph 2:



4.4.2 Analysis of the students' results

- Question 1: Did I try to speak even if I did not know the words?

The results showed that the use of the OpenLearning technology helped the participants maintain the use of English even if they did not know the words. At different degrees, as shown in the histogram above, the OpenLearning platform had a positive impact on the participants' fluency. A possible analysis could be that the OpenLearning has given the participants the chance to prepare themselves before they posted their final reflection or to practice their performance before the final submission as I explained earlier in this chapter. Another possible analysis could be the somewhat high rate of engagement that the participants deployed in the given activities as could be deduced from the results drawn from question #2.

- Question 2: To what extent was I engaged in doing the activity?

The results showed that out of 34 participants, five were engaged in the activity all of the time, 15 participants were engaged in the activity most of the time, 14 participants were engaged in

the activity sometimes. These results showed that all the participants were engaged in the activity, and more than half of them were engaged most of the time. A possible explanation could be that the OpenLearning was a new learning experience to the participants, as mentioned by all four interviewees in section 4.4. Since the platform incorporated the use of their favourite technology devices, such as mobile phone or iPad, and one of their most favourite means of interaction, the social media way, they wanted to explore, try and participate. By doing so, they were indirectly practicing their English speaking skill, and this was considered a positive impact of technology on their oral fluency.

- Question 3: Did the OpenLearning class motivate me to speak in English?

The numbers in Graph 2 show that the OpenLearning class did not have a positive impact on the motivation of five students out of 34, according to the responses obtained. At different degrees, the rest of the participants were motivated to speak English through the platform. I would say that motivation was intimately related to preference and interest. It is possible that the OpenLearning class was not the learning preference of those five participants, as Samuel mentioned in his message on the chat box in section 4.2.2. Another possible interpretation could be that recording oneself was a stressful activity to some students as the results of Question 5 reveal. In question five, four students mentioned that they were all the time anxious and 15 students mentioned that they were most of the time anxious while recording their opinion or reflection. However, we could not overlook the fact that nine students were always motivated to speak English using ICTs, eight were most of the time motivated and twelve were sometimes motivated, and this is considered a positive impact.

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- Question 4: Did the OpenLearning class help me speak English when using the platform outside the classroom?

Around 30% of the participants (10 out of 34) mentioned that the OpenLearning platform did not help them speak English when using it outside the classroom or in their everyday life. Through the self-evaluation grid, the participants were able to give feedback on the impact of ICTs on their oral performance; however, it did not give them the space to give more details and explanations on their stance. For this, further studies could be done to discover more about why the use of ICTs did not help these students to speak English outside the classroom through the

use of the OpenLearning platform. Moreover, around 70% of the participants (24 out of 34) mentioned that the OpenLearning platform aided them to speak English outside the school hours.

- Question 5: Was I anxious while recording my opinion or reflection?

Around 30% of the participants (11 out of 34) said that they were anxious while recording. According to the close percentages in Questions 4 and 5, it can be inferred that about 30% of the participants mentioned that the OpenLearning platform did not have a positive impact on their speaking fluency when using it outside the classroom. In Question 4, ten students said that the OpenLearning technology did not help them speak English outside the classroom through the use of ICT. In Question 5, 11 students said that they felt anxious while using the OpenLearning technology. If we follow the sequence of results in Questions 3, 4 and 5, the reason could either be lack of motivation or anxiety. More studies should be done to prove the validity of this hypothesis.

- Question 6: Did I speak in a different language than English?

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Knowing that the 34 participants come from different ethnic backgrounds and have a different first language, the result drawn from this question was interesting. It confirmed that 100% (34 out of 34) that on the OpenLearning platform and with the help of ICTs, the ESL participants in this study were able to communicate in English only despite the lack of motivation or anxiety or preference challenges in some cases. Therefore, I can infer from the results drawn from the self-evaluation grid that the OpenLearning technology helped the participating students to be engaged in maintaining a conversation in English only. It also encouraged them to speak a different language than their mother tongue. On the platform, all the participants interacted in English. The OpenLearning technology enhanced the students' English fluency on the platform despite the lack of motivation and anxiety that some participants felt during the intervention. In question 4, around 30% of the participants mentioned that the OpenLearning technology did not help them speak English outside the classroom or in their everyday life when they are not in class or engaged in a speaking activity on OpenLearning; however, this platform helped them maintain an English conversation when using a social-media-like technology.

4.5. Conclusion

In Chapter 4, I presented and analysed the data collected in my study. The Teacher Evaluation Grid showed an improvement of the speaking fluency for more than half of the students participating in this research after using the OpenLearning platform. The interview results showed that using technology to learn is one of the participants' preferences that encouraged them to speak English outside the classroom through the use of ICT. The Self-evaluation Grid results showed a positive impact on the students' engagement to maintain a conversation in English only since all 34 participants spoke English all the time during the oral interaction activities on the OpenLearning platform.

The teachers' evaluation grid showed that the results of the post-intervention presented a positive impact of OpenLearning, as an ICT tool, on the students' oral performance. The students who participated in the interview reported that the OpenLearning technology is an interesting experience and a new way to learn. As a result, the four participants said that they used this technology to speak English more fluently inside and outside school for various needs and purposes at work, on sports tournaments and with friends. The self-evaluation grid results presented a positive impact of ICTs on most of the participants, especially on their engagement in the learning process, and on their perseverance to use only English while participating in the learning tasks.

More studies could be done to figure out the reasons why the use of ICTs did not have a positive impact on the five participants who were not motivated to speak English more fluently or the ten participants who felt anxious when recording themselves speaking English in this study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 draws a conclusion to my study. It relates the questions that were raised in the beginning of the research to the final results achieved at the end of the study. As a concluding chapter, it mentions the summary of results, the limitations and the contributions of my research, and opens up to more possible future studies.

5.2. Research Question 1: Summary of Results

To what extent does the use of the OpenLearning technology in the ESL classroom improve the speaking fluency of L2 learners in the context of a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal?

When introducing my research problem situation: high school francophone students in Greater Montreal who face challenges in expressing themselves and interacting orally in English, I suggested technology as a tool that could be used in the ESL classroom to help learners improve their oral fluency. My study aimed at finding out the impact of the OpenLearning technology on the development of the speaking fluency of L2 learners in the context of a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal. To measure this development, I built a Descriptive Teacher Evaluation grid (Appendix 3) to verify the effectiveness of the OpenLearning tool. Therefore, the teacher grid was set to compare the development of the speaking fluency of the participants before and after the use of OpenLearning.

The data collected from the teacher grid were analyzed quantitatively through comparing the results in percentages that the grid generated. It was concluded that the use of the OpenLearning tool showed a positive impact on the participants' oral performance. The comparison of percentages revealed a neutral improvement of five students out of 34 whose grades did not show any difference with or without the technological intervention, a positive improvement of 29 students out of 34 whose grades have improved after the use of the OpenLearning technology.

When analyzing the results of the pre and post interventions based on the same teacher evaluation grid, it was worth mentioning that the OpenLearning technology helped the participants focus more on fluency rather than on accuracy. In other words, the OpenLearning technology helped the students speak in English throughout the intervention without being afraid of making mistakes. The focus on fluency had encouraged the participants to overcome their anxiety, and therefore, to speak more fluently in English.

This positive impact cannot be generalized since technology had also its drawbacks, as reported by some students who preferred live oral interaction to virtual interaction through a screen, or who decided not to participate in the study, or who found that dealing with an online platform was time consuming.

5.3 Research Question 2: Summary of Results

Does the use of OpenLearning serve to create a connection between the ESL classroom and the students' everyday life? If so, how?

The objective of this question was to try to find a means that could make learning a second language more authentic. In other words, the study answered my research questions by that trying to show that students become more engaged and more motivated to speak English more fluently when they touch the reality that the target language used in the classroom could also be helpful to fulfill outside the school hours.

To show whether the OpenLearning platform could be a useful tool that links the classroom to the outside world of the students, I made an interview with four participants. The data collected from this interview was analyzed qualitatively. The results showed coherence between the objective intended by this research question and the experience lived by the four participants. The results showed that using technology to learn is one of the participants' preferences that encouraged them to speak English outside the classroom when participating in the speaking activities on the OpenLearning platform.

The OpenLearning technology did not only help the participants to create a bridge between the ESL classroom and the outside world, but also highlighted the fact that authentic learning happens when the students will be able to transfer what is learned in class in their real and authentic spoken conversation; the fact that motivated the four participants to be actively

engaged in this study and helped them enjoy using OpenLearning to speak English more fluently.

5.4. Research Question 3: Summary of results

What impacts does the application of the OpenLearning technology have on ESL students who face challenges speaking English fluently?

The above question was raised to evaluate the effect of a technological intervention on the development of the students' fluency based on their own perception. To answer the question, I chose to create a Student Self-Evaluation grid (Appendix 4).

The data collected from this grid were analyzed quantitatively and presented in a histogram in section 4.4.1. The results from the OpenLearning study showed a positive impact on the participants oral fluency. Based on the results drawn from the self-evaluation grid, the OpenLearning technology helped the participants maintain the use of English when speaking even when they did not know the words. These results could be justified by the high rate of engagement that the participants dedicated to the speaking activities given in the lesson. The OpenLearning technology gave the participants the chance to experience learning a language at their own pace and the way they prefer it to be learned; that is through a platform that is similar to other social media platforms they use in their daily life. Therefore, based on the self-evaluation grid results, I could deduce that motivation, engagement, student preferences and interests are indispensable variables that should be taken into account when helping students to become more fluent English speakers.

However, we should not overlook the fact that around 30% of the participants felt anxious while using the platform. According to them, the OpenLearning technology did not motivate them to speak English more fluently when on the platform outside the classroom. In order to discover the reason of this limitation and a pertinent solution to it, further studies have to be conducted.

5.5. Limitations of the study

Despite the positive impact that the OpenLearning technology had on the speaking fluency of the ESL high school students, this technology had also its drawbacks.

Some students found that the platform was time consuming because they faced some technical problems when downloading the OpenLearning application, when trying to understand how the application functions or when trying to upload a large file on the platform. To solve the problems, the students needed the teacher's assistance or a classmate's help which made them consume extra time and ask for a delay to submit their work.

Others reported that the OpenLearning technology could have been more efficient had it been used throughout the school year long. According to them, a couple of activities were not enough to help them achieve their highest potentials. I find that this limitation is logical since the study was conducted over a limited period of time. It is normal that some students need more time to experiment via the new technology in order to achieve a higher development in their speaking skill.

Some participants who showed slight improvement reported that recording themselves speaking English is as stressful as speaking in class because they found it weird talking to a camera or recording their own voice. This limitation is linked to the students' different preferences in learning which seems to me very normal. It is also worth mentioning that trying to meet the learning preferences of all the students in a teaching and learning situation is a challenging task.

The decision of not taking part in this study of a few students who encounter learning difficulties or disabilities impeded the researcher from collecting important data that could have helped manifest some crucial results regarding the usefulness of technological interventions on making an impact on the students with learning difficulties or disabilities improve their speaking fluency. This limitation hindered the production of interesting results that could have shown the impact of ICTs on the development of the speaking fluency of students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The results of the pre and post evaluations of the three students to whom the technological intervention had presented no impact showed that those students were capable of speaking English fluently with or without the use of a technological intervention. This could be

related to the fact that some ethnic communities, such as Greeks, Indians and Armenians, speak English at home after their mother tongue.

Knowing that I had no control on the students' participation outside the class hours, some participants had benefitted to practice and prepare their oral contribution before posting it on the OpenLearning platform. These students reported to me that they did not record their contribution live on the platform. Despite that they were interacting in English, their participation was not spontaneous. In everyday life conversations, oral interactions are not usually practiced.

At different degrees, the OpenLearning technology was not a learning preference to a few students who did not show motivation when using the platform to speak English when using the platform outside the classroom hours. Despite the comfortable context in which the activities were done, a few students found the experience stressful. Therefore, the self-evaluation grid could have been designed in a way so as to have given the participants the space to give more details and explanations on their stance. For this, further studies could be done to discover more about why the use of the OpenLearning as an ICT tool did not help these students to speak English on a social platform outside the classroom hours.

These limitations did not have a negative impact on the students' performance or relationship with their teacher. However, all the limitations mentioned above could be taken into consideration in future studies.

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5.6. Contributions of the study

The study presented results that showed a generally positive impact of Information and Communications Technology on the speaking fluency of ESL students in a francophone high school in Greater Montreal.

OpenLearning is an online platform that empowers the students' fun and social experience in the heart of a learning task. It encourages learners to practice their speaking skill, to socialize, to collaborate and to give feedback. In my opinion, what has helped the students to be more motivated and engaged in the speaking class is that OpenLearning is free and can be joined via a laptop, ipad or a mobile phone. In other words, students could download the OpenLearning application for free on their mobiles, for example, and they could also participate in the speaking activities anytime outside the classroom through the use of the application. This

tool is pertinent since it meets the objective of my study which is to use ICTs to develop the learners' English-speaking fluency that enables them to fulfill their needs inside and outside the classroom when participating in speaking activities on the OpenLearning platform. On OpenLearning, the teacher is able to evaluate, give feedback and follow the students' progression through a descriptive evaluation grid that I created and made available on the platform. The resulting observations and data which are captured from student activity, experience, and engagement within the platform are holistic and authentic. They are also valuable to me, as a teacher and researcher, because they indicate the students' motivation in participating in an online experience, as well as the effectiveness of this ICT on the students' speaking skill.

The results showed that using technology in ESL speaking activities enhanced the students' focus on the production of fluent and continuous speech in English rather than on accuracy despite that some students may not have been completely spontaneous. The focus on fluency had encouraged most participants to overcome their anxiety, and therefore, to speak more fluently in English inside and outside the classroom through the use of ICT on a platform.

The OpenLearning technology gave them the space to create a link between the importance of learning English in class and the pertinence of using it outside the classroom through the use of ICT on the platform. The use of technology did not only help the participants to create a bridge between the ESL classroom and the outside world, but also highlighted the fact that learning becomes more meaningful when the learners can transfer what is learned in class to their outer world.

Moreover, the chat box private messaging had created a relationship of confidence and cooperation between the students and their teacher. This relationship which was based on confidence and cooperation enhanced the feeling of engagement and belonging to the English class inside and outside the school; it connected the whole group of participants and their teacher to a course of cooperation, interaction, fun and confidence inside and outside the class hours. Through the OpenLearning platform, the students used one of their 'best-friend' tools, technology, to be actively engaged in speaking activities inside and outside their classroom. This technology transformed the traditional English class into a real-life context that motivated most participants to be actively engaged in this study and helped them enjoy using technology to speak English more fluently.

5.7. Future Studies

Nowadays, technology and artificial intelligence are shaping the world. We are living the fourth industrial revolution which has and will have an impact on every single aspect of our lives including education.

Imperatively, the relation between technology and education has become imminent. Schools, colleges, universities, students, teachers, principals, educators and professionals are living alongside with technology and smart machines to fulfill their everyday life purposes. Therefore, technology has become a fundamental common tool used by all the actors in the field of education. Guided by the conviction that technology has been created by humans to serve their needs and facilitate their lives, I will endeavour to use technology or maybe artificial intelligence algorithms to find solutions to problems in education. The aim is always to enhance education and to stimulate the learner to persevere despite the difficulties that he /she might face.

One of the research topics that I might focus on in the future will be using technology and artificial intelligence powered platforms to help students with learning difficulties persevere. The artificial intelligence platform will be used inside and outside the classroom through the use of ICT since learning opportunities should no longer be restricted to the classroom in a world of globalization. This platform, which is still a project, will help the teacher address the main concerns, needs, preferences or difficulties of every student individually by collecting and analyzing information from the student's interaction with the course, the material and with his/her classmates. This might give a forecast of how to intervene depending on each student case and to measure how the student will progress or will react to this intervention.

This intelligent system will allow the teacher to identify the gap and to respond to it while engaging the student in a learning experience quilted to help them overcome their struggles and to suit their needs. The system will have a reciprocal benefit since it will help the teacher adapt his/her teaching methods, tools and interventions according to each student case. This does not mean that using artificial intelligence will help all the students with learning difficulties since perseverance is not restricted to their challenges in education. Many other variables play a role in helping or not a student to persevere. Such variables could be the student's social background and personal life that will remain very difficult to automate.

5.8. Conclusion

When I decided to conduct a research in my teaching context, I had the motive of helping my students to become more fluent when communicating in English. Communicating in English happens inside and outside the classroom through the use of ICT; the fact that makes learning this language important and useful. Its importance and usefulness depend on the students' need to apply what they learn in class in their everyday lives in order to fulfil their need to work, to travel, to go to college or to socialise. Therefore, I was driven by a conviction that learning becomes useful when it can be used to fulfil the learner's different needs in everyday life situations, when it creates a bridge between what is learned in class and what can be done with this knowledge outside the classroom through the use of ICT.

To sum up, the use of the OpenLearning technology tool had shown a positive impact on the speaking fluency of the ESL high school students who participated in this study. This technology had encouraged most of the participants to speak English more fluently. The OpenLearning platform created a bridge between the ESL classroom and the students' outer world. By using the platform inside and outside the school, they were able to practice their English fluency in order to connect with their teacher and peers, and to engage in everyday life discussions to fulfil their different needs.

Despite this positive impact, the OpenLearning technology had its drawbacks. Some students found that the platform was time consuming, some others found that the use of technology did not help them overcome their anxiety, others believed that practicing oral fluency through a screen was not their learning preference, and some others who encounter learning disabilities decided not to participate in the study.

This study was a threshold to further studies that could be done to discover more about why the use of the OpenLearning as an ICT tool did not motivate some students to participate in the study or even to speak English more fluently outside the classroom through the use of ICT. Future studies related to technology, artificial intelligence and education could be extended and deepened not only to help students who face challenges become more fluent, but also to help those who face learning difficulties or disabilities for various reasons persevere and achieve a high school diploma.

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APPENDIX 1

E-MAIL TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

October 2nd, 2017

Dear Mr. XXX,

My name is Mariam Karam. I am a teacher of English as a second language. I have been teaching for over 15 years now. I completed my bachelor's degree in English Literature and linguistics in Lebanon, and obtained my teaching diploma from the Lebanese University. Then, I pursued my graduate studies in the same field at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik in Lebanon. Along the years, I have attended many workshops in Lebanon and in Canada. Now, I am completing a Professional Master's degree in Teaching and Learning at the University of Sherbrooke (MQES: *Maitrise qualifiante en enseignement au secondaire, cheminement anglais langue seconde*).

Education has always been my passion. I do not consider teaching as my job, but as a mission through which I am given the opportunity to leave a trace in the young people that I meet every year. This small trace can help our youngsters develop and grow into educated, passionate, ambitious and lifelong learner citizens ready to make their society and the world a better place to live in. My experience in the field of education has led me to make many observations, one of which is that learning becomes more meaningful when the knowledge acquired in the classroom is authentically related to the learners' life outside the school premises. In the same respect, learning English becomes more meaningful and fulfilling when our young people are capable of using the language they are learning in class and in their community, at work, at college or even on social media. My readings and studies have shown that achieving the goal of making English a more authentic and tangible language has to start from the teenagers' interests, needs and preferences. For this, I have chosen Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to be my tool that will probably allow my students to speak and use English inside and outside the four walls of the classroom.

The fruit of my learning journey in MQES is a research paper entitled *What is the effect of Information and Communications Technology on Speaking Fluency of ESL Students in a Francophone School in Montreal?* The main objective of my research is to show the functional role of ICTs in helping students in the context of a Francophone high school speak English more fluently inside and outside the four walls of the classroom. To achieve my goal, I need to conduct a qualitative and quantitative study in which I will use ICT activities. Those activities require the students' participation in online activities, video recordings, interviews and evaluation grids. The information collected as a result of those interventions will help answer the objective of the study.

By this, I am asking your permission to allow me to conduct my study in your school, XXX, with one secondary 5 group. Kindly learn that the participation in this study is free and voluntary, and that the data collected will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

For any further inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor, Ms Patricia Houde by email at patricia.houde@usherbrooke.ca

I look forward to your consent.

Sincerely,

Mariam Karam
Enseignante d'anglais (secondaire 5)
École XXX

APPENDIX 2

LETTRE DE CONSENTEMENT ET D'ASSENTIMENT POUR PARTICIPER À UN PROJET DE RECHERCHE

Chercheuse: Mariam Karam

- Enseignante d'Anglais à l'École Secondaire XXX
- Étudiante en maîtrise qualifiante en enseignement au secondaire: cheminement anglais langue seconde.
- Courriel:XXXX

Superviseure: M.Ed. Patricia Houde

- Chargée de cours, Université de Sherbrooke, Département de pédagogie
- Courriel: XXXX

But de l'étude: Cette lettre vous est envoyée pour demander votre consentement ainsi que l'assentiment de votre enfant pour participer à l'étude suivante : *What is the effect of Information and Communications Technology on Speaking Fluency of ESL Students in a Francophone School in Montreal?* Votre enfant est invité à participer à un projet de recherche mené par son enseignante d'Anglais à l'École Secondaire XXX. Le but de l'étude est d'aider les élèves à parler plus couramment l'anglais et améliorer leur compétence disciplinaire, tel que prescrit dans le programme du ministère de l'Éducation: *interagir oralement en anglais*.

Procédurier: Le projet se déroulera en classe pendant les cours réguliers dans le cadre du programme d'Anglais de l'élève. Votre fils ou votre fille participera à des activités en ligne et à des enregistrements vidéo en classe et à la maison. Ils seront également interviewés et évalués pour déterminer si l'utilisation des outils technologiques utilisés dans ce projet les aide à parler plus couramment en anglais.

Risques potentiels: L'enseignante discutera avec les participants de l'importance d'utiliser la technologie, l'internet et les enregistrements à des fins d'apprentissage uniquement. Lors de la signature de ce consentement, l'élève attestera de respecter sa vie privée et la vie privée de ses camarades de classe qui participent à l'étude. Par conséquent, les élèves ne sont pas autorisés à copier ou à diffuser des informations partagées ou du matériel enregistré et produits par leurs camarades de classe dans ce projet.

Avantages potentiels: Nous espérons que cette étude nous aidera à développer nos compétences professionnelles et à améliorer la situation problématique de s'exprimer avec plus d'aisance en anglais parmi nos participants. Les élèves apprendront à utiliser les technologies de l'information et de la communication à des fins d'apprentissage. Ils apprendront à exprimer leur opinion de manière respectueuse, à interagir avec les pairs sur un sujet connu ou entendu.

Confidentialité: Lors des entrevues, les évaluations et les enregistrements, aucune information d'identification personnelle ne sera recueillie (par exemple, noms, numéros d'étudiant, adresses électroniques, etc.) et la participation sera anonyme. Les enregistrements seront uniquement utilisés par la chercheuse pour compléter son projet de recherche dans le cadre de la maîtrise en enseignement au secondaire : spécialisation anglaise langue seconde de l'Université de Sherbrooke. À la fin de l'étude, toutes les données collectées seront détruites et ne seront pas utilisées pour d'autres fins.

.....

Formulaire de consentement et d'assentiment à retourner à l'enseignante avant la date du 13 octobre 2017

Veuillez signer ci-dessous si vous avez lu les informations ci-dessus et acceptez que votre fille ou votre fils participe à cette étude. L'autorisation de participer à cette étude ne renonce à aucun de vos droits ni ne libère la chercheuse de sa responsabilité. Votre enfant pourra se retirer du projet en tout temps. Une copie de ce formulaire de consentement vous sera remise et la chercheuse conservera une copie.

Parent: Oui: ____ J'accepte que mon enfant participe à l'étude.

Non: ____ J'aimerais que Mme Karam me contacte pour me donner de plus amples informations.

Signature du Parent: _____ Date: _____

Élève: Oui: ____ J'accepte de participer à l'étude.

Non: ____ Je n'accepte pas de participer à l'étude.

Oui: ____ Non: ____ Je consens à ne pas copier ou diffuser les enregistrements vidéo ou vocaux utilisés dans cette étude.

Nom de l'élève : _____

Signature de l'élève : _____ Date : _____

APPENDIX 3

DESCRIPTIVE EVALUATION GRID

TEACHER EVALUATION

Research Questions: To what extent does the use of the OpenLearning technology in the ESL classroom improve the speaking fluency of L2 learners in the context of a Francophone high school in Greater Montreal?

Evaluation Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
Production of speech	Student produces speech that is clear and contain only a few minor errors if any. 5 marks	Student produces speech that is clear with some errors that do not impede understanding. 4 marks	Student produces speech that is understood with some interpretation. 3 marks	Student produces speech that is mostly difficult to understand. 2 marks	Student does not participate or produce speech. OR Student relies on mother tongue or on a different language to express messages. A total of 0 marks for this level
Fluency	Speech flows easily and smoothly with no hesitation. 5 marks	Speech flows easily and smoothly with little hesitation. 4 marks	Speech flows despite some hesitations. 3 marks	Speech is often impeded by hesitations. 2 marks	

Adapted by Mariam Karam from Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur - Grille d'évaluation de l'interaction orale- Anglais, langue seconde, programme de base

APPENDIX 4

STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION GRID

Research Question: What impacts does the application of the OpenLearning technology have on ESL students who face challenges speaking English fluently?

Think about your experience with OpenLearning.

Check mark the statement that best describes your experience and speaking performance.

Hand in the sheet to your teacher.

A: All the time

B: Most of the time

C: Sometimes

D: Never

Grade	A	B	C	D
Did I try to speak even if I did not know the words?				
To what extent was I engaged in doing the activity?				
Did the OpenLearning Class motivate me to speak in English?				
Did the OpenLearning Class help me speak English when using the platform outside the classroom?				
Was I anxious while recording my opinion or reflection?				
Did I speak in a different language than English?				

Created by Mariam Karam, October 2017

APPENDIX 5

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Research Question: Does the use of OpenLearning serve to create a connection between the ESL classroom and the students' everyday life? If so, how?

Before the interview:

1. Welcome the student and ask him/her if they are comfortable before starting.
2. Ask the student his/her name.
3. Explain the purpose of the interview.
4. Explain that all the participants will be asked the same questions.
5. Explain that the data collected is confidential and will only be used for the study.
6. Tell the student that the interview will be about 10 to 15 minutes long.

Interview Questions:

- Make sure that you understand the question before you answer.
 - Answer the questions by choosing from the list of answers provided.
 - Do not hesitate to ask for further explanation if you find the question difficult to understand.
1. You have participated in the speaking activities via the OpenLearning Platform. Can you describe your overall experience ?

 2. Is French your mother tongue or first language?
 a. Yes
 b. No
 3. How often do you speak English outside school ?
 a. Always
 b. Sometimes
 c. Never
 4. Where do you usually use ICTs ?
 a. At home
 b. At school
 c. At home and at school

5. How often do you use ICTs (mobile, internet, laptop, ipad ...)?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Never

6. Do you enjoy using ICTs in the English class?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No

7. In the OpenLearning activities, you used the internet, your laptop, your mobile and/or your ipad. Where did you use the OpenLearning Platform ?
 - a. In school
 - b. Outside school
 - c. A and B

8. How did the OpenLearning Platform activities and the video recording help you speak more fluently outside the classroom (when using the platform outside the school hours)?

9. Can you describe some of the disadvantages of using the OpenLearning Platform ?
 - a. It was difficult to use.
 - b. It was time consuming.
 - c. I did not record myself
 - d. It had no disadvantages.
 - e. other

After the interview:

Thank the student for having participated in the project.

Created by Mariam Karam, October 2017

APPENDIX 6

MODULE INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

- Follow the instructions below to participate on the OpenLearning Platform.
www.OpenLearning.com/courses/battling-bullying
- Your teacher will upload a video about *Bullying*.
- Watch the video.
- Use your class notes. React to the video by answering the following questions :
 5. What kind(s) of bullying you see in the video? Name them and define them.
 6. How would you react if you were bullied that way?
 7. What can you do to change the situation in your school?
 8. What advice would you give to the bully?
- Record yourself giving your opinion through voice or video. SPEAK ENGLISH !
- React to one of your classmate's recordings. SPEAK ENGLISH !

How you will be evaluated:

- Your teacher will evaluate you based on the evaluation grid provided to you (see appendix 3)
- When you complete the activity, you are invited to evaluate your participation. (See appendix 4).

Created by Mariam Karam, March 2017

APPENDIX 7

LEARNING AND EVALUATION SITUATION

XXXXXXX
High School

Learning and Evaluation Situation
English as a Second Language
Core Program
Secondary, Cycle two, Year 3
(Secondary 5)

BATTLING BULLYING!



REINVESTMENT AND WRITING BOOKLET

Name: _____

Date: _____

Group: _____

Adapted by Mariam Karam from Bully Movie on Twitter: "Be someone's #hero today! Wise words from @StopBullyingGov #empathy and #kindness are always important

DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING AND EVALUATION SITUATION

Overview

Almost all students have witnessed a bully in action, and yet it is the most underreported problem in schools. Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending themselves. So, everyone needs to get involved to help stop it (<https://www.bullyingcanada.ca/what-is-bullying>).

Targeted Competencies

C2: Reinvests understanding of texts

C1: Interacts orally in English

Description of Activities and percentages:

Activity 1: Read about bullying and answer the questions. (C2)

Activity 2: Share ideas about bullies and bullying. (C1)

Duration:

- You have 150 minutes to complete both activities.

Final Grade:

Activity 2: Grade /100

GOOD WORK 😊

Created by Mariam Karam, March 2017

ACTIVITY 1: READ ABOUT BULLYING

BATTLING BULLYING

In this activity, you will read a text about bullying and its impacts on students your age. You will then answer comprehension questions about the texts.

Here is how you will evaluate yourself:

C2: Reinvests understanding of texts

- Did you answer all the questions correctly?
- Did you use reading strategies to help you read and understand?

Instructions

- Work individually
- Read the questions before you begin to read the text.
- Look at all the text. Use the *Be Smart Strategies* that we have learned in class to help you read and understand:
 - Take notes in the margin as you read.
 - Highlight and circle important information in the text using colors.
 - Make inferences to answer the True or False questions.
- You may write notes on the test paper.
- Answer the questions after you read the text.
- Review your answers.
- Discuss and share your answers with your teacher and peers.

Created by Mariam Karam, March 2017

What is Bullying?

1. Have you ever made a joke about how another person looked? Has someone ever made you feel dumb? This is bullying. Bullying is probably a new word to you. To bully is to intimidate another person. A bully is someone who uses strength or power to harm or intimidate a person who is weaker. A bully repeatedly intimidates her or his victim.
2. Some people believe that bullying is just a normal part of growing up but this is not true. Bullying is not normal behavior and it can have devastating effects. Do you know that 80% of adolescents are bullied during the school years? Bullying happens once every seven minutes on the playground and once every twenty-five minutes in class. Seven 7% of secondary one students stay home at least once a month because of bullies.
3. What exactly is bullying? Bullying takes many forms. There is physical bullying, which consists of actions like shoving or hitting. Verbal bullying means insulting people and using put-downs. Social bullying is gossiping, spreading rumours and excluding a person. The last form of bullying is sexual harassment. This involves unwanted and unprovoked comments, sexual advances or sexual requests.
4. Bullying is a problem for boys and girls, but studies show that boys bully more than girls do. Boys usually are physical, and the bullying often results in fighting, shoving and punching. Girls are more subtle when they bully. Girls usually gossip, spread rumours or exclude other people in order to destroy friendships. This subtle form of bullying is just as harmful to the victim as physical violence, but harder to detect because it leaves no outer physical marks.
5. Studies show that students rarely help victims and can reinforce the bullying by either joining in verbally or physically or just by being an observer. An observer simply and does nothing to stop bullying. Many students report that they didn't step in to help the victim because they were scared of bullies. People believe they are powerless to change the situation. They also believe that telling an adult will only make the problem worse. Some students who did report bullying or being bullied said that they were not taken seriously. Some students were even told that they needed to learn to stand up for themselves or fight back.
6. Bullying is a serious problem in schools today and it is everyone's responsibility to stop it. Many reported cases of ten suicides are a direct result of bullying. Victims feel powerless and alone and often get depressed. It only takes one person to stand up against bullying to make a difference.
7. What are some things that you can do to prevent bullying? Connect with people who share a common interest, stand up for yourself and others without getting physical or fighting. Also, make sure your speech and actions are not harmful to others. You should report bullying to an adult whom you trust, who will listen and who will take action.

Comprehension Questions:

➤ **Answer the following questions in a few words.**

1. What are the four forms of bullying mentioned in the text?

.....

2. How do girls bully differently than boys?

.....

3. Who is responsible for putting a stop to bullying?

.....

4. What are the two ways to prevent bullying that the article suggests?

.....

5. Do you think the suggestions made in the article can actually stop bullying? Why or why not? Explain your answer.

.....

➤ **Vocabulary:**

- **Match each vocabulary word to its appropriate definition.**
- **The paragraph number indicated between parentheses will help you find the words faster in the text.**
- **Use the context to help you understand the meaning of the words.**

1. Intimidate (parag.1) _____
2. Devastating (parag.2) _____
3. Shoving (parag.3) _____
4. Gossiping (parag.3) _____
5. Rumour (parag.4) _____
6. Subtle (parag.4) _____
7. Reinforce (parag.5) _____
8. Prevent (parag.7) _____

- a. to push someone or something in a rough or careless way, using your hands or shoulders
- b. making stronger or worse
- c. to say things about someone that are not necessarily true
- d. not easy to notice unless you pay attention
- e. to frighten someone, especially to make them do what they want
- f. a currently circulating story of uncertain or doubtful truth
- g. highly destructive or damaging
- h. to keep something from happening

➤ **True or False:**

- **Read the following statements about the text.**
- **Say whether they are True (T) or False (F).**
- **Justify your answer.**

1. A bully intimidates someone else only once in a while.

2. It is important for someone to get bullied because it helps him or her grow stronger.

3. Sexual harassment is not always physical.

4. Subtle bullying is a kind of physical violence.

5. It can be deduced from the text that bullying can be life-threatening.

6. The author's purpose is to urge people to report acts of bullying.

7. It can be inferred from the text that we can do nothing to stop bullying.

Adapted by Mariam Karam from *Express Yourself: English as a Second Language, First Year of Secondary Cycle Two, Evaluation Situations, Teacher's Guide* by Philippa Parks and Tanja Vaillancourt

ACTIVITY 2
C1: INTERACTS ORALLY IN ENGLISH
Share your opinion about bullies and bullying!

In this activity, you will discuss as a group your ideas about bullies and bullying.

- **Your teacher will evaluate you on your oral interaction skill (C1) during this activity, so make sure that you *always speak English* and you follow the evaluation grid provided to you (Appendix 3).**

Instructions:

- Choose your group (2 or 3 students).
- Use the reading text and vocabulary in Activity 1 to answer the following questions:
 - Which type of bullying is the worst? Physical? Verbal? Social? Sexual harassment?
 - Which type do you find the most hurtful? Why?
 - If you were bullied, how would you react? Would you ignore the person or talk back? Would you tell a teacher?
- You need to give your opinion. You may agree or disagree but must give reasons why. You may use your notes.
- Keep talking! Participate as much as possible!

Created by Mariam Karam, March 2017